

Starkey, William

An apology for the laws ecclesiastical established, that command our
publick exercise in religion and a serious enquiry, whether penalties be
reasonably determined against recusancy

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George Wilson,

November 8th 1854.

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

L A W S Ecclesiastical
ESTABLISHED,

That command our Publick exercise in

RELIGION;

A N D,

A serious Enquiry, whether

PENALTIES

Be reasonably determined against

RECUSANCY.

By *WILLIAM STARKET*, D.D.
Rector of *Pulham* in *Norfolk*.

L O N D O N.

Printed by T. R. for Henry Brome at the Gun at the
West end of St. Pauls Church, 1675.



By WILLIAM S. PARKER, D.D.
Rector of Rushmore in Norfolk.

Printed by J. R. for Henry Broom at the Gun at the
Well end of St. Pauls Church, 1873.



T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

P E T E R,

Lord Bishop of

E L Y.

My LORD,



Here be two Idols set up among
our Brain-sick People, which
must be broken down, *viz.*
LIBERTY OF CONSCI-
ENCE and TOLERATION.

Under the Name and Colour of the first, ma-
ny set up their mislead Perswasion for a Law,
and so sin without possibility of any sense of
Guilt or Conviction.

A 2

Secondly,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Secondly, Under the Name of Gospel *meekness*, *gentleness* and *peacableness*, they cry up **TOLERATION** and **IMPUNITT**, and so are without fear to add sin to sin, when in no danger of a subsequent punishment.

These, if suffered and countenanced, will in time overthrow **RELIGION** and **GOVERNMENT**, which are the pillars and support of *Order* and *Peace*, both in Church and Kingdom.

To encounter and remove these two great obstacles of our *Happiness*, my design hath been in this little Treatise to assert and prove two things; 1. *That there must be just Laws established in every Society, to limit the Conscience of the Christian and Rational man, and that whosoever transgresseth those Laws is guilty of sin, notwithstanding any plea of Conscience, which can give no license for any man to sin.* 2. *That Punishments, by Gospel Rules, are necessarily inflicted upon obstinate Offenders, and that Toleration and Impunity are of dangerous consequence to our King, Church, and whole Nation.*

The Reasons are many that induced me to dedicate these weak Meditations to Your protection, my good *Pious Lord*, as that I might lay hold on the first opportunity of manifesting that just Observance Your *worth*
and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and *dignity*, as well as your *favour*, have challenged and extracted from me. And, because honoured with the Title of being Your *Son*, I accounted my self in duty obliged to give you some assurance of the soundness of my *Judgment*, and steadfastness of my *Faith* and *Conscience*, firmly assenting and adhering to the right exercise of the best Religion, and the best Government under Heaven, which must tend not only to my own credit, but Your content and satisfaction. And my Ambition is to give Testimony of some resemblance to be in me to such a Father, whose zeal and ability to defend the *Church* and *Government* is eminently known to a great part of the World. And verily, it is but common prudence for my own security to provide such a Patron as You are, to assist me in defending a Noble Argument, which though full of *Truth*, *Loyalty* and *Necessity*, fit to be published, yet in probability can no sooner be drawn out but it must expect to meet with much opposition.

Yet this gives me encouragement, that while under your Banners though I expect many Gainfayers, yet I can fear no Confuters. If I should fall it will be honourably, yet I dare promise my self to come off victoriously. And under Your conduct I cannot
but

The Epistle Dedicatory.

but assume fresh Courage, if called upon farther, to maintain the *Faith* of the Gospel, the *uniform Worship* of God, the *Government* both in Laws and Penalties justly fixed and executed against *Recusancy*, which will certainly advance the *order, peace and welfare* of our whole Society.

My prayers and endeavours are intent upon these things, and so long as I continue steadfast in those Designs and Attempts, I hope You will not account me unworthy to profess my self, as the Churches, so

Your Lordships most obedient Son,

and

Humble Servant,

W. STARKEY,

Four PROPOSITIONS
offered to Consideration.

- I. *The Laws of our English Government, that command every Believing Subjects Uniformity in the publick exercise of Religion, are established according to the Law of Nature, and Rules of the Gospel.*
- II. *The wilful Omission, or Recusancy, of any Baptized Subjects Conformity to such Laws, is an open Sin, and a dangerous Disobedience.*
- III. *The threatening and determining of Punishments, to be inflicted upon wilful Transgressors of such Laws, are according to the dictates of Human Reason, and the constant practice of the Church of God.*
- IV. *The inflicting of Punishments, as determined, is just and necessary for the safety and welfare of our Nation.*

Propo-



Proposition I. Chap. I.

*Governours are to be appointed
over every Believing Society,
by the Laws of Nature and
Rules of the Gospel, and our
Governours are so appointed
especially.*

Section,

- I. *What is conceived must be meant by the Law
of Nature.*
- II. *What we are to understand by the Rules of
the Gospel.*
- III. *By both these, Governours are to be appointed
over every Believing Society.*
- IV. *Our Governours are thus appointed over us
especially.*



A

Serious Apology

FOR THE

LAWS Establish'd in the Ex- ercise of RELIGION.

SECT. I.

I.  **G**OD Almighty, who of his infinite wisdom, in decent and comely sort hath sweetly ordered and disposed all his works in number, measure, and weight, hath given to every of them a principle, form and measure of working to moderate and limit their force and power, fit, suitable and correspondent to their designed end to some Canon, Rule, or Law; A *Law* which they cannot pass naturally, but moving by that Law according to their several conditions they may come to that acquiescency and content, that may render them happy according to their several capacities.

B

If

If they be *Inanimate Creatures*, that move unwittingly, and yet constantly, as the *Heavens* and *Elements*. The Sun knoweth its rising, and the Moon its going down: The Stars keep their courses, the *Orbes* their Rotations, according to Gods Ordinance or Decree they all move, as the Divine wisdom orders them.

If they be *Animate Creatures*, that have, though weak, yet some understanding, they move from the most perfect principle they have, to seek their content and satisfaction; To gratifie their *senses* is their utmost aim.

And if they be *voluntary Agents*, that clearly apprehend what they do, yet kept they are as inclined in one constant tenure and course of working, according to the establishment of Natures law. And this innate obedience to the *law of Nature*, as God hath ordered, is the stay, the ballast of the whole World, that Gods Creatures cannot naturally or ordinarily do otherwise, than to shew themselves apt and inclineable to this innate Obedience.

Now *MAN*, that hath a *Rational* and *immortal Soul*, and so a more noble Principle, and hath more excellent endowments and perfections than the rest of *visible Creatures*, must aim at nobler Ends, attainable by those *faculties* and *abilities* with which God of his goodness hath extraordinarily blest him. So, that to gratifie the *sense* cannot be his utmost aim, but to content the *Spirit*, which is attainable by *light of Reason*, and her improvements, directing him to those Actions that may conduct and lead him the readiest way to the

the enjoying that *Happiness* which is intended.

So that *Man* acts most naturally when he acts most rationally; when, by that noble principle of humane actions, his *Spirit*, he inquires, searcheth, discerneth, judgeth and elects fit and suitable Means directly tending to that ultimate End, *viz.* his *content* and *acquiescency*, unto which he aspires and inclines. So the *Spirit* of Man is the *Candle* of the Lord set up in his Superiour part, to direct Mans goings in the *night* of this World, and to *guide his feet in the way of peace*. So, upon discursive Reasoning, to choose and approve of the most plain way, and most direct means, to conduct him to his designed end of *content*, must be granted to be the *Nature of Man*.

And the Laws of *Mens Natures* are the results and last conclusions of the *Spirits* practical Reasoning. The dictates of the *Intellective part* prudentially limiting, directing and ordering mans Actions, as they most probably move in a straight tendency to their ultimate End, are the *Laws of Nature* in Men. Now *Man* is to consider himself in a double respect, privately, singly or distinct from company, and rationally is to mind his actions for his particular *peace*; or publickly, as interested in humane Society, and to order things rationally for its *general good*.

For internal, secret Actions, that tend to every single mans particular *content*, a mans own *Reason* may be supream Judge, and give Laws and Rules for his direction. In such cases we allow every man the judgment of his own *Discretion*. But for

open and external Action in our Conversations, as relating to *Society*, for regulating them every man is not a competent Judge. That's Natural, *Quod convenit cum natura sociali & rationali*. It's natural for Man related to a *Society*, to submit to the just determinations of his *Governours*, whose wisdom knows to order what is best and most conducing to *Publick peace*, which by reason in this last Circumstance he is bound to preserve and maintain. And yet, then also private Men move naturally in a direct tendency to their own particular happiness, when they discharge those duties of *Charity* and *Kindness* that preserve peace to their Neighbours, to which they are obliged; and they by it create a content and delight in their own *Spirits* which naturally must be satisfied.

They erre dangerously that think, and say, *That because they have a Law from their Reason, within their selves, for their own private and secret Opinions, that their own Reason may give directions for publick Actions that concern their Neighbours.*

The Laws therefore of Mans nature, that direct mens external Actions to promote the peace and welfare of *Humane society*, are not Mens private particular Judgments, but *Governours* sober and deliberate determinations.

For if every Mans particular Judgment were his natural Law in *Publick* Concerns, what could be expected, but from different and contrary Judgments, there would be different and contrary Affections and Actions, a renting into Divisions and Dissensions, and an irreparable breach there would be

be of *peace*, which is the main end of *Government* and *Society*.

So that if *Subjects* will move naturally and rationally in a settled Society, they are to account the just and sober Constitutions of their wise *Governours* to be the Laws of their Natures to direct them for Peace, to which they are bound naturally to conform. *Just Constitutions*, I say. For neither power, greatness nor multitude, countenancing or maintaining disordered Actions, can make them natural to men, but only their consonancy to Reason, and tendency to a good End. And so it is not, what hath been done, or what is generally done through *sense*, *passion* or *custome*; but, what ought, may and hath been done upon sober, deliberate *Reason*, is to be accounted natural to man.

And, if we consider, we must acknowledge that very oft *prejudice*, *education*, *passion*, *custome* and *interest*, hath perverted the Reason of *Governours*, but these things ought not to be thrown as a reproach upon *Humane Nature*. He saies true that saies, *Hony is sweet*, though sick men think it not so. It is not to be reputed the *Nature* of men, but *corruption* of Nature, when numbers of men choose or determine any thing *impious* or *unjust*. It is not *Humane Reason*, but the *depravation* of it that dictates and concludes practically of any thing that is *filthy* or *dishonest*. For they act not rationally that erect not proper means, nor humanely that fix not in a right end, that is, the *publick good* of the Community in which they are interested and concerned.

From our *paper Hectors* and *whifflers* for *Humane Reason*, although I hear much of the noise, I can see very little of the thing in them; For not aiming at the end of *Society* they cease to be *humane*, and not choosing the Means and Rules to the *End*, which is the right ordering of publick Actions, they cease to be rational and prudential.

So the dictates and conclusions of the sober discursive Reason of *Governours*, deliberately directing and choosing fit means to compass the designed End of *Societies* peace and full content, are to be concluded the Laws of *Mens Nature* in relation to their Societies, by *Governours* to be established, and by *Subjeſts* naturally to be submitted unto.

And thus also we must determine, if we will considerately be directed by the Rules of the Gospel.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

2. **G**OD, who made *Man*, of his free Grace, the perfectest of all visible Creatures, and capable of greater Happiness, hath given him greater endowment and ability by which that *Happiness* might be attainable. And therefore hath ordered and placed the *Intellective faculty*, as the *Sun*, in the heavenly part of that Microcosme, by whose clear dictates, as so many radiant emanations of light, Man may walk safely and guide himself. But, by the unlucky interposition of *Earthly delight*, *Sense*, *Passion* or *Custom*, this glorious Light of Heaven, from time to time, hath suffered Eclipses; and Men too frequently, like Beasts in a Wilderness, have wandred out of the Way, and have found no full content to rest in.

But evident it is, Our Gracious God, who knew not to take off utterly his Loving kindness from man, nor suffered his Care of him to fail, out of a tender regard to his safety, hath, at sundry times and in divers manners, given Men the light of his *Word*, and hath openly from time to time declared, *That he would have Man come to the knowledge of Truth and be saved.* And therefore he, who out of his great love, spake to our Fathers by his *Prophets*, hath in these last daies spoken to us by his Son, whom he sent from his bosom to reveal this good Will of his, to transform Mankind by *renewing the Spirits of their minds*, while they approved the good and acceptable Will of God; and this is rightly called the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, the *Will* of God in this last dispensation, revealed and published by Christ and his Apostles, is that which we understand by the Gospel; and this is no more than the good News of a *possible Happiness* for Man, and the Rules to be observed by which that Happiness is attainable.

Now this, I humbly conceive, is the best and most warrantable Notion we can have of the Gospel, *That it is a form of Government which Christ hath left to the World, for those that would be of his Church and People, That by agreement of submission to those Rules prescribed, a Company of faithful Professors might perfectly joyn themselves together into a comfortable Society and Communion.*

For Man is ζῷον πολιτικόν, a Creature given to Society, fitted by nature, and by his ingenious disposition is inclined to it. Now every Company or Society which is necessary for the well-being of Man, must, for that end, have a frame of Polity, a model of Government from just Laws, deliberately agreed upon, and wisely constituted and set over it. And these things which are in every wise Government, are eminently conspicuous in the Gospel, which is undoubtedly the best frame of Government in the World.

So were those Inspired Authors perswaded, that wrote the *Canonical Epistles* to the several Churches after Christs Ascension, and 'tis clearly apparent in that profound Epistle written to the *Hebrews at Jerusalem*. For at that time when that Epistle was written, there were two famous Governments that stood in Competition for precedence in that place: *The Old Law, or Jewish Polity, delivered*

livered by Moses to the Israelites ; and the New Law, which is the Gospel given by Christ unto Believers. And our Holy Author in that Epistle , makes it his business to prove , That the Gospel delivered by Christ was justly to be preferred before the Law , delivered by Moses ; and that, as Christ, so did his Gospel in all things deserve the prebeminence.

The Church then is a Society of the Faithful, and the Gospel is to be looked upon as the model of Government which Christ left his Church. Every Believer then must not only look on the Priviledges and Mercies, promised and exhibited in the Gospel , as the ground of his confidence ; but on the Laws enjoined in the Gospel , as just and wise Rules , directive of his obedience. And we cannot but observe , that the Promises of the Gospel are not absolute but conditional, upon our Faith and Obedience to the Rules prescribed , *if we love him and keep his Commandments.* Which, till we do heed and observe, we will be too favourable to the spawn of the *Gnosticks*, those Libertines that multiply and thrive in the midst of us , who looking on the Gospel as a Promise of Mercy , and not as a Rule of Duty, turn the Grace of God into wantonness, and continue in sin securely , *because Grace abounds, which God forbid.* When Christ is the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey the Gospel, Heb. 5. 9. And they that walk according to this Rule , they may look for that mercy and peace which is promised to the Israel of God. Gal. 6.

So the Will of God under this last dispensation manifested and published by Christ and his Apostles, is,

is, that which we understand by the Gospel.

Now of things thus manifested some are *supernatural*, great mysteries of Godliness, that *Angels desired to peep into*, those perspicacious intelligences were glad to behold; Things the Wise men of *this World* did not know, *flesh and blood* could not discover, but contrived they were by the manifold wisdom of God, and published of his infinite goodness by his Son, who hath kept nothing secret of the Counsel of his Will, but hath declared what is necessary for us and our Salvation. And unto these Objects, *Supernatural*, we are to make our application by Faith and Hope. And from the Objects, I suppose, our applying our selves by believing and relying on them, are called and accounted *supernatural* also. Although certainly, we have reason enough to assent to these things as true, and rely on them, and rejoyce in them as good, which our gracious God, who is truth and cannot lye, of infallible veracity hath clearly manifested by his Son, and his immense goodness inclined him, to reveal by him what he saw was necessary for our Salvation, and we are to apply our selves in reason to them accordingly.

But some things are *Natural*, such as by disquisition of Reason may be discerned and concluded; as, That God, *the first infinite Being*, is a Spirit, that *he is but One*, and to be worshipped, &c. That *our Neighbour is to be loved, edified, comforted, and what we would that others, &c.* And Christ came not to destroy this Law, but to fulfil it.

These Rules, *Natural* and *Rational*, are afresh established by Christ in his last dispensation, and by

a new publication revived for Morality , and mens comfortable Conversations. These are reasonably called *the Rules of the Gospel*.

Now the Gospel, as well as our Treatise, respects not only *single persons* but *Societies* , and several directions are given by Christ and his Apostles , for ordering mens Conversations in Societies for publick good.

To shew that Governours by these Rules must be appointed over Societies , is the next considerable.

S E C T. III.

3. **N**O sooner could Mankind multiply unto that number that might admit of *Society* or *Communion*, but had they continued in a state of *Innocence*, Superiority and Inferiority , Dominion and Subjection would have been found amongst them.

Adam, the first Father of all Mankind, from priority of Nature and Existence , from power , wisdom and experience that was eminently in him, from the protection his Posterity had from him, and their dependance upon him , had been absolute Monarch, Ruler and Judge over all that descended from him. And with this Authority of Rule *Cain* was invested, when *Abels* desires were to be towards him , and *Cain* was to Rule over him. And when in every Family there is a Guide , one
Father,

Father, one Master to be honoured and obeyed. That in many Families united in Society there should be one supream Moderator to Rule, is natural and necessary.

And that cannot be unlawful among Men on Earth, which God hath revealed to be among the Angels in Heaven, where there are *Thrones, Principalities, Powers* and *Dominions*. The highest in the Order ruling subordinately under God, without Tyrannical insulting, and the lowest Subject, without murmuring or opposing. *Regere & Regi necessarium est*, To Govern and be Governed is necessary and natural. Neither *beauty* nor *being* of this Glorious Universe could subsist or continue without Order, unless some part did Rule and some Obey, unless one were Chief to Command others that belong to it.

Consider that the God of *Nature* hath thus ordered every thing. In our *Bodies*, One head over the members; In our *Souls*, One understanding over the other faculties. In the *visible Heavens*, One Sun in the Firmament over all the Stars. Over the whole systeme of Creatures, Heaven and Earth, visible and invisible, One *G O D* ruleth over all.

And if no Superiority were settled over a Company associated by Heirship or Descent, of necessity there must be *Rulers* elected and *Judges* appointed to determine Controversies, and preserve Peace, without which the happiness and welfare of the Society could never be promoted. For if every mans Opinion or Will were suffered arbitrarily to be his Law, when every man from the pride of his

his heart, and ambition of Precedence, is inclined pertinaciously to adhere, and unyieldingly to maintain his mis-led Perswasion, and is prone by all means to bring others to submit unto him. If none were appointed (whose *wisdom* were not to be doubted, nor *goodness* nor *justice* suspected, nor *Authority* to be opposed or gainsayed) by whose determination, judgment and order, the People were to abide by, what could follow from *Contrariety* of Perswasions but *divisions*, what could succeed but a *dissolution* of that Peace and Unity which is the sure wall of defence, to support and maintain the whole superstructure of additional Comforts, which are necessary for the welfare of the whole Society, what can be expected but *rending* into several Parties and Factions, and there must unluckily succeed a disorderly *Chaos* and confusion, and every evil work.

Rulers then must of necessity be appointed, to prevent Controversie and settle Peace.

And as *Judges* and *Rulers* must be appointed over every Society for *Peace* sake, so must such also be appointed for *Righteousness* sake.

Distributive Justice is the glory, exaltation, the stay, the preservation of any Nation.

Now distributive Justice is, *to render to every man according to the merit of his Work*; that he that doth well might have encouragement by due Reward, and he that doth ill might be discouraged by proportionable Punishments: That there be a right Sentence, and care of a due Execution.

Now if no third Person, or Order of men unconcerned, were agreed upon and constituted as
supream

supream Judges to determine the *merit* and *quality* of Private mens Actions, and the measure of *Rewards* and *Punishments* that did in equity belong to them; We see how every man for himself, if he hath done well, is ready to overvalue his Merit, and extend the measure of Reward to himself beyond a due proportion; and if he hath done ill, to extenuate if not excuse his own Irregularity, and to mitigate if not exempt his Punishment. And for his *Neighbour*, every man is ready to extenuate his Merit and lessen his Reward, to heighten his Crime and aggravate his Punishment. So 'tis very improbable, either for himself or others, that according to *distributive Justice* men should pass a right Sentence or due Execution.

This being clear to every mans Reason, *That a parity is not to be allowed, but Rulers and Judges must be appointed over every Society, as well to preserve Peace as to maintain Righteousness.*

And to the conviction of this Truth by their *practice*, all Nations that have associated, have subscribed and have declared their Assent to the conveniency and necessity of it, by the management of their Concerns: And, *Generalis consuetudo declarat institutum Nature*; For never any City or People, associated, but constituted their Governours, and some as Supream; nor sent abroad an Army but appointed their General. The thriving *Aristocracy* of the *Romans* were never in any notable streight, but *Trepidi ad Dictatorem confugiunt*, as their chief Remedy and Security. And never was there any tumultuous Rabble of *seditionous Persons*, united upon wicked deligns, that could in reason suppose

suppose they could subsist in carrying on their wicked undertakings , in acting for a lawless Liberty or Licentiousness, but they alway appointed a *Captain* or *Leader*, to whose Command and Conduct they did alwaies submit , when they had made Choice of him to be Supream in any Enterprize that they desired to be successful ; and owned him to be so.

To Conclude this point then , let it stand as unquestionable, *That every man that loves his Life, desires it may be Comfortable, and seeks his preservation and welfare.* And a Comfortable life to prevent evil and promote good, is to be maintained by *Society*, which cannot be compassed by singularity or separation. Neither could I ever read or hear, that ever any *Society* did in reason think or conclude to subsist and pass a quiet and comfortable Life, without the appointment of *Governours* among them.

Thus by light of *Reason* and her Dictates , by *Nature* and her Laws, it is manifest that the appointing of *Governours* over every Society is both necessary and convenient , and this will be more fully cleared and illustrated, when we consider it is approved by the Revealed Will of God.

Moses was a King over *Israel*, and a Judge deputed by God, by whom Kings did reign, and Princes did decree justice. And where no *Governours* were there the People did fall into confusion , as *Israel* did at that time when they had no King, but every man did what was right in his own eyes. And in the last dispensation , *Cesars* Authority was owned by Christ, and *Tribute* paid to him. And so *Pontius Pilate*,

Pilate, Power was given him from above. They might abuse their Power, but their Authority was of God. And in St. Pauls time, Magistracy was Gods Ordinance, Powers were appointed of God, Rulers were Ministers of God set over the People for good. Prayers were to be made unto God for them, and account was to be given unto God by them. And Humane Ordinances were to be submitted unto for the Lords sake. And this yet more evident from the Spirit of Christ, which was to be with his Church to the end of the World, when it was and is the declared Sentence and Faith of all particular Churches, that Governours are appointed by God.

And now, how can we but stand amazed at the impudence of some perverse Spirits, ungoverned, unnatural Tempers that are to be found in the midst of this crooked generation, such as neither will Lead nor Drive, neither Command nor Obey, but make it their business to despise *Dominions*, and speak evil of *Dignity*. That dare speak and think, that *Superiority* in any man is unnatural, hellish, Antichristian. That *Rule and Government* is but the unlucky issue of *Pride, Arrogance, and Ambition*, assumed by *Usurpation*. When from the premisses, it must be concluded as *Natural*, and the *Ordinance of God*.

Certainly, it is but just and reasonable that such men should suffer the punishments of their own Choice, and be taught to see the madness of their own delusions, by abjuring the Realm, and banished from partaking the Priviledges of a well-governed Society. Sure a City is not so fit for such Persons as a Prison or a Wilderness, who have espoused
such

such wild unnatural principles, that are not owned by the Beasts that perish.

And it is yet more strange, that any such Tempers should be found in our Nation, where it is most apparent that our *Governours* are appointed and approved by God especially.

S E C T. IV.

Our Governours appointed and allowed by God especially.

4. **A** Midst our *Governours* we have one Supream, Chief and Head over all. And this *Supremacy* and *Headship* rightly belongs to him by his legitimate Heirship and succession, being descended from a long series of *Royal Ancestors*, that had this Power successively committed unto them: *Minori discrimine Princeps sumitur quam queritur.* And when we seriously consider the *Conspiracies, Tumults, Factions, Divisions*, experimentally, that attend upon our Election, we have reason to think him most likely to be a *Blessing* that comes in Peace to be set over us by a rightful Succession.

But if any will wilfully still oppose, that likes *Election* better than *Succession*, let such remember, There was a time when all the *Tribes* met (and every *Tacit Consent* was then included) to choose Him, and to make our *David*, King. That he

was not more Eminently born, than made *Chief Ruler* among us: And, that by Election as well as Succession, *Supremacy* doth justly belong unto him. And Chosen H E was, prudently, freely, and by universal Consent.

But other *Governours* we have, *Inferiour* and *Subordinate*, appointed and allowed of by Him, which (because the Church is in the Kingdom) must be of two sorts, *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, that the People may live quietly, *in godliness and honesty*.

The Chief of both sorts of these subordinate *Governours*, He that is *Supream* convenes to his assistance, deliberately to *consult*, and *advise*, and *determine*, both in making Laws and Execution. And by this *Determination* and *Concurrence* of our *Governours*, no Person can justly fear to suffer by a precipitate Rage or Tumult of a *Popular Fury*, or the unreasonable Impositions of an *arbitrary Tyranny*. So if soberly it be considered, *If any Governours can be said in all the World, certainly ours of England must be acknowledged to be set over us, and appointed by God.* And, were the Learned *Hugo Grotius* that Master of Reason alive, he would conclude the Government of *England*, both in *Church* and *State*, the best in all the World.

And if any *Governours* under Heaven can be said, to be allowed and approved of by God over any Society, ours of *England* must in reason be concluded to be so undoubtedly; not only from their reasonable *Constitution*, which is most convenient, but from that extraordinary care and love that God hath declared towards them from their Miraculous *Restitution*, which, if we consider, cannot be said
to

to be done by the power of *Man*, but by the overruling Spirit of *God*.

Gods *love* and *liking* of Persons and Nations, is more seen by *deliverance* of them, than by their *continued preservation*. He was more eminently known to be *Israels* God, by bringing them out of *Egypt's* Bondage, and the *Babylonish* Captivity, than by bringing them into the Land of *Canaan*. The turning again *the* Captivity of *Zion*, must force the Heathen to say, *The Lord hath done great things for them, and taken great care of them.*

And for us, that have felt the misery of Old, and seen of late the *Deliverance* and *Restitution* of our *Zion*, the Heathen would rise up in Judgment against us, if we should not say, *It was the Lords doing.* It is his mind and purpose, declared by this *Miraculous Restitution*, That this People of *England*, should be led like Sheep by the hand of *Moses* and *Aaron*.

Thus Governours are appointed over every Society, and ours of England over us especially, by the dictates of Reason, and appointment of God.



C H A P. II.

That Governours thus appointed, are to aim and contrive for the good of the Society, and deliberately to determine and publish Laws. And Subjects are obliged to submit to those Laws accordingly.

Section,

- I. *Governours are to contrive for the Publick good and welfare.*
- II. *To promote Publick good they must take care to establish Laws.*
- III. *Laws must have their Rectitude, and oblige to what is Just.*
- IV. *Deliberation is requisite before determination of Laws.*
- V. *After Deliberation, there must be a Publication.*
- VI. *To Governours Laws thus Established, Subjects ought to submit with willingness, and Ours of England ought to submit especially.*

S E C T. I.

I. **G**OD, in whom we live, move, and have our being, hath so sweetly and wisely disposed of this Systeme of *Creatures* to his own Glory, that every Creature hath a natural inclination and propensity to the *preservation* and *welfare* of its Fellow Creatures; and out of that *love* and *propensity* they freely communicate, according to their ability, what is good and beneficial. And this *Communicative Love* is diffused as an active principle to cement, compact and uphold every part of this admirable Structure in that glorious frame and order in which now it stands, so as every *Creature* seems to loose of its own nature, when it ceaseth to incline to this Natural operation. For who so blind but must perceive, that amidst Inanimate Creatures, freely and chearfully, the *Sun* imparts its *light*, the *Heavens* their kindly *influence*, the *Clouds* their refreshing *Rain*, the *Fire* its *warmth*, the *Earth* its *increase*. In Sensitive Creatures, *Birds* and *Beasts* are gracious and helpful to their *fellow Creatures* of the same species, and joyn in Company and Bodies to that end, and call their *Fellows* to the same common food, and affright them from open snare and danger.

But this inclination in the *Creatures*, receives the measure and limits of its activity according to the different *principles*, *faculties* and *endowments* they have

have to operate withal: So every *Creature*, the more perfect it is, and the more it hath of Gods likeness, the more it discovers this *propensity* of *activity* and *readiness*, to communicate what is *comfortable* and *suitable* to the nature of its Fellow Creatures.

Man therefore, that hath most of Gods likeness hath the greatest *propensity* to this goodness, and is naturally addicted to shew it, by communicating of what is most beneficial to them most willingly, who are like *God* and *himself*, and are in greatest Capacity to receive, and disposed to make the best improvements of this *Communication*.

Now among Men it is to be supposed, That *Governours* are, or should be most like God, *who fills the Earth with his goodness, he openeth his hand, and fills all things living with plenteousness.* As Gods *Deputies*, they ought to be most ready and active, from an *heavenly providence*, to impart what is beneficial to them that are under them. They are not set up aloft like liveless, dead *Idols*, for men to gaze on, to admire and Idolize, and yet continue useless, neither see nor hear, nor regard nor contrive for the *good* and *comfort* of others. But, as living *Images*, of that *benificent God* whom they represent, out of a gracious providence they are to be contriving, directing and acting for the *good* of them under them: *presunt ut prosint*, above and over others to *benefit* others, not minding their private advantage, but are elevated to have the more Heavenly influence for the publick *good* of the Community over which they are placed; *Non Dominandi cupiditate imperant, sed officio consulendi.* Their office, like *Shepherds*,
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is not barely to fleece, but to feed the Flock ; *Patres patrie* , not only to defend and maintain the People, but are to direct and order them. *Ministers of God for good*, Rom. 13. 4. For *compleat good* , being to watch over their *Souls* for good , while they carefully endeavour that the People under them may lead *contented lives*, full of all *peace*, in all *godliness and honesty*.

If any such be known, who watch for their own *private gain* more than *publick good* , let such modestly be desired , either to lay down their *Honour*, or take up their *Office*. For its evident by *Reason* and *Scripture* , That it is every good Rulers duty, not only to hinder the *Evil* , but to promote the *Publick welfare* of the Society over which he is placed.

S E C T. II.

To promote Publick good , Governours must take care to establish Laws.

OF necessity there must be *Laws* constituted about every Company of *Men* that are knit into one Body ; for if not *restrained* and *limited*, many Persons that have more *Sence* than *Reason*, would wildly break out into exorbitant excursions, and mislead others, extravagantly , into dangerous *Irregularities*. A City had better be without *Walls* than *Laws*, its *safety* depends more upon the latter

than the former. For without *Laws* Men would be like Beasts, the *strongest* would devour the *weakest*, and savagely tear and devour one another without controul. The *Sword* would be the Rule of *Justice*, and the *strongest Arm* would have the best *Cause*, Men would regard *Power* more than *Right*. So that *Law* in a Society is like a *Soul* in a Body, without which the *Body* is corrupted and dissolved immediately.

And as *Laws* must be of necessity to uphold the *being*, so must they be to preserve the *welfare* of any Society : For they afford direction and guidance for *humane actions* ; And as good take the *Sun* out of the Firmament as *Laws* out of a Nation, without which, as in a perpetual Night, men would stumble (if not fall) and dash continually one upon another, and offensively. Another hath it, *Laws* are as *Eyes* to the Commonwealth, that give *beauty* to the *Face*, and *direction* to the whole *Body*. But to set forth the *usefulness* of *Laws*, sure I cannot do it better than to compare them to *Nerves* and *Sinews*, ligaments of the *Body politic*, not only to compact and knit the several *Joynts* into *one Body*, but to convey *life* and *spirits* unto every part as is convenient, that they may all agree in the same *regular motion* as they are adapted, and every part may move for the *safety* and *welfare* of the whole. Neither *being* nor *welfare* of a Society can be preserved without *Laws*. But, *Who are to make and appoint Laws?* There's the Question.

He that ordered Kings to *Reign*, hath ordained Princes to *decree Justice*. The first duty and work
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in Magistrates is to *ordain* and *constitute Laws*. This is the *Rulers Province*. It was rightly determined by the Schoolmen, *Non cujuslibet Ratio facere potuit Legem* : Every man is not wise enough to make a Law. And if he had a *Head* to *contrive* , yet he hath no *Authority* to *establiſh*. And there is no reason to think, That any *publick Law* ſhould be of a *Private mans* constitution. For every man of the ſame Condition may challenge the ſame Liberty : So that there being contrary *Judgments* and *determinations*, there might be contrary *Laws*, and ſo there would follow contrary *Actions*, inevitable *diſtraction* and *oppoſition*, which will not only deſtroy the *welfare*, but the *being* of the Society. For private Perſons to make *Rules* and *Laws* for their own private *Actions*, who can hinder them.

But our gracious God hath appointed *Governours* as his *Deputies*, by a *wiſe Providence*, to direct and order the publick *Actions* of men , for the publick good of the *Society* in which they are intereſſed ; As, *God*, the *World*, and *Chriſt* his *Church* ; ſo are good *Governours* to Rule over their People by conſtituting *juſt Laws* that promote their *Happineſs*.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

LAWS must be established, and the nature of a *Law* is, that it doth oblige *ad id quod rectum*. It is the first thing required to the Constitution of a Law by the Schoolmen, *Rectitudo, Right*. A tendency to the End: A *Law*, a *Canon*, a *Rule*, is a notified *boundary* to confine and limit mens Actions, that they may not be loose and extravagant, but they may be directed in a streight Line or tendency to the prize aimed at, *viz.* The *Comfort* and *Content* of the Society to which such *Laws* are composed and published.

The word *Κανὼν*, is oft used by St. Paul in his Epistle to the *Gracian* Churches, and oft he alludes to their Agonistical concertations in their *Istmian Games*, especially that of *Running*: And beside, the *Barriers* from whence the *Coursers* started or leaped, and the *Prize* or *Crown* to which they tended, they had their *Κανὼνα*, a *white Line* which marked out the Path, bounded the Race; and whatever the heat or activity of the *Racers*, ran they never so swiftly or vigorously, if they transgressed or ran over the Line, this was not *νομικῶς ἀθλῆσαι*, 2 Tim. 1. 5. to *strive Legally*; and consequentially they lost the *prize*.

A Christians Conversation amidst *Believers* is a *Race* from the first exertion of Reason, whereby he leaps into Society: He stretches forth, and aims at an incorruptible *Crown* that God holds forth unto him. Whatever the Christians *beat* or *agility* is, if he

he will *so run as he may obtain*, he must observe that *Kavóva*, that *Rule* that is given him, and not transgress those *limits* that are prescribed him. All *aberration*, all *extravagancy* must be declined, he must keep close exactly to the *line* and *limits* prescribed, that he may move in a direct tendency to the End proposed.

Now *Rulers* and *Governours* are to intend the publick good and welfare of the Society. To compass this they *Establish Laws*, and these Laws are directive *Rules* of humane Actions, tending *ad bonum publicum*. They are to think and consider, and if *Reason* rightly deliberates, she will conclude and determine only of such things as are *true*, *honest*, *just*, *pure*, *lovely*, of *good report*, if there be *any vertue*, if there be *any praise*, they will think and determine only of such things. *Injust* then and *dishonest Commands* cannot be called rightly *Laws*, because they tend to the hurt, not the good of the Publick. For *Rulers* to Command without controul, and to set no bounds to their *lawless Will*, and inconsiderately to enjoyn what is *unjust*, *illegal*, and what tends not to good, is the *Vice* of Superiority and Power, not the *vertue* of Ruling by a *Law*. For nothing can be called a *Law* but must oblige to what is *Just*, and tend to a good End. The End must be *Peace*, the Means must be *Righteousness*; for the effect of *Righteousness* is *Peace*: And, where *Glory* dwells in a Land, *Mercy* and *Truth* meet together, *Righteousness* and *Peace* kiss each other. And as such Commands cannot be called *Laws*, if *injust*, so, when imposed, they are not binding nor obliging. It was not more stout and valiant than rea-
reasonable

sonable and honest, that *pious Apology* made by the *Father* for the poor persecuted Christians to the Emperour, who commanded them irreligiously to sacrifice to Idols, *Da veniam Imperator, &c. major est, &c. Give pardon, Ob Emperour, we cannot obey thy Commands in this thing; for he that is greater than thou art, Commands the contrary.* And when Commands are contrary from two Powers, *supream* and *subordinate*, greater and lesser, it is beyond dispute which we ought to obey. To obey the Subordinate powers Commands, when the Supream forbids, is downright *Rebellion*; but to obey the Supream powers Commands, although the Subordinate power Commands the contrary, is honest and reasonable *Obedience*. And the Supream, holy God, who Commands only what is *Just*, is to be obeyed before the *Emperour*, when he is Subordinate, when he commands things unjust and unwarrantable. Therefore with the Three Children, *We are not careful to answer the King in this matter. It's better to obey God than Man.* This then we conclude, That Laws of Rulers must be *Just*, and tend to a good End.

Some Laws are *Natural* of things or actions Natural; some *Positive*, of things or actions Indifferent. Those that are Natural have, *Intrinsecam vim obligatoriam*, from their Equity they have an obliging vertue, if no publick position or Constitution. These are of things or actions of their own nature either *good* or *bad*, and would be followed or avoided by Reasonable Man, and would be approved or disallowed of a Just God, if he had neither commanded nor forbidden them.

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Now, besides the *Ten Words* God gave to *Jacob*, there were *Statutes* and *Ordinances* that God gave to *Israel*, when particularly he undertook the Government of them, some *Voluntary Laws*, some *Ceremonial*, some *Judicial* things enjoined, that were of their own nature neither good nor bad. But, *Præcipiendo debita, vetando Deus illicita fecit*, Gods Authority being uncontroulable, and his Wisdom unquestionable, they were to be followed or avoided as most convenient for that People in that present condition. What was intrinsically lawful was universally binding, *Christ came not to destroy that Law, but to fulfil it*; *Heaven* and *Earth* may pass away, but not *one tittle* of that *Law* was ~~not~~ to pass away, but ought to be fulfilled. But what was *positive*, *particular* and *voluntary*, were Changable, and these had their *period*, some of them at Christs Passion, more of them at the dissolution of the Nation.

Now, as it was with *God* and his *Israel*, so is it with godly *Rulers* and their *People*. There are certain Rules and Statutes rationally agreed upon and published, as the most Just and best directions, conducing most to the *good* of the Community where divulged; among which some are *Natural*, that are of their own nature intrinsically good, and have an obliging nature, and would be binding as Laws of God, if no position, if no Constitution from Man, such as necessarily indispensable, neither are they to be abrogated or null'd by man, that cannot be made unjust by God himself. But, other Laws among them are *positive* and *voluntary*, which have their position from Man only, and so may be called
Humane

Humane Ordinances, Laws of Convenience, such Constitutions as are established upon deliberation as most convenient, *pro hic & nunc*, in the Judgment of Grave and sober Persons, chosen and appointed for determination of such things, for the peace and good of the Community wherein they live: And, *Sufficit Ratio Universalis*, we are to abide by it. That a thing or action suitable, and in Reason tending to the peace and good of the Society, should be *determined*, and when determined should be *obliging*. To Conclude then this particular, *Lex est ordinatio Rationis ad bonum publicum ab eo, qui curam habet Communitatis promulgata*: When so it is, that a Law is a right order and appointment of Reason for Publick good, published from him that hath the care of the Society. And, sith some Laws are *natural*, *immutable*, *indispensable*, and are fixed and determined eternally before any Constitution of Governours; but others are *voluntary*, *temporary*, *mutable*, that have their Constitution and Establishment from Governours determination upon *conveniency*. These latter determinations of indifferent things are properly called *Laws of Governours*. Laws and Determinations of *Natural* things, the Governours do but revive and invigorate them; but the Laws and Determinations of *Indifferent* things, the Governour animates them, gives them being and establishes them. So these *positive Laws*, Constitutions of Indifferent things, to prevent *division* and settle *peace*, these are properly the Laws of Governours; and it is natural and necessary for them, to take care of such *Determinations* in their respective Societies; They
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are Reasonable and Just because of things not unlawful: They are necessary because they tend to Peace.

Thus it is clear, to any sober Reason, *That Governours ought to determine and establish Laws, for the good of the Society in which concerned.*

S E C T. IV.

4. **D**eliberation is requisite to be previous before the Determination of such Laws: For, when a Law is the ultimate dictate or conclusion of the Governours practical Reasoning, this cannot be supposed without previous discourse, without considering and perpending seriously the *legality* or *illegality*, the *convenience* or *inconvenience* of the Action, and so by publick Authority it is decreed to be done, or forborn, accordingly.

Imperious Commands of the Greatest persons, that are imposed suddenly or precipitately, lose much of their Authority and influence upon the *Subject*, being entertained but faintly, when liable to be suspected as the issue of *pride*, *ambition*, *fancy*, or *passion*: But when the morality and conveniency of the Action commanded or forbidden is fully debated and weighed, before decreed, all *prejudice* is quite abandoned, when it clearly appears the Decree is the result of a sound Judgment, and the product

product of a sober Reasoning. Though many Laws of Governours, fixing and constituting, are called *Voluntary Laws*, yet they are not rashly, but discursively established: For Governours are Gods *Deputies*, and like him determine Rules, *ὡς ἐβόλετο τῷ θεῷ*, by the Counsel of his Will. *Deliberandum est diu quod Statuendum est semel*. Determination of things are not warrantably done but in every Counsel, as in the first, *πολλῆς συζητήσεως γενομένης*, much debate and disquisition being made, the Decree was fixed accordingly.

To Command therefore, arbitrarily any thing or action out of a listful appetite, *rashly* or *unadvisedly*, in the heat of a Passion, is an Impulse *sensual*, found in Beasts, and cannot be proper to men. For when the Sun of *Reason* goes down in the night of *Passion*, Men, like Beasts, run headlong into Pitfalls, Snares and Gins, and give, too hastily, place to the Destroyer. That cannot be a binding Rule to Rational Creatures, and entertained as a Law, that comes without *Deliberation*. *Nebuchadnezzar's* Commands by *Sheriffs*, *Dan. 3.* for *all People to fall down and worship the Image of Gold*, was not a Law though it had Publication; for it wanted two things required to constitute a *Command* a Law: 1. It wanted *Rectitude*, it was not Just. 2. It wanted *Deliberation*. But when *Consideration* is antecedaneous to the Decrees of Rulers, it gives the Subject great satisfaction, and inclines them cheerfully to submit and conform to such Rules established, if they think soberly, and esteem the *Ruler* wiser than themselves. And what is the Justice of our Laws established, in this required particular? what

what is the reasonableness of our *Submission* is clearly apparent among us, when there is nothing enacted or established among us, but upon long discussion and serious deliberation, and that by sober and wise Persons, *suffecti*, substituted and deputed by us beyond all question and exception. If *Laws* established by such Persons be not received thankfully, and be not submitted unto heartily, the perverse Transgressor sins without excuse.

It is certainly evident in the Constitution of our *Laws*, what is required in every good Law, *That they are determined upon Deliberation.*

S E C T. V.

5. **L**AWS, when deliberately determined by Rulers, are to be *published* to the Society, that they may oblige the Subject, *ad eorum qui Legi subjiciuntur notitiam deduci oportet*, *Tho. Aquinas.* They that are to be brought to the *subjection* of the Law, are to be brought to the *knowledge* of the Law.

Natural Laws there be, and necessary it is they should be published; for, although such Laws are written in mens hearts, yet by evil Custom, Compliance, Passion and prevalency of Temptations, and men *sensually* yielding to them, these Laws are blurred and almost obliterated, and necessary it is, that by repeated impercussions, there should be endeavoured a new impression by a new impunction.

Necessary it is that Rulers, by a new inculcating, should give a fresh beauty, vigour and obligation to them, and by annexing a weight of *Punishments* and a spring of *Reward*, should set Subjects in a constant motion to observe and keep them; for, if concealed in silence, they would be passed by Carelessly, and that men may be awakened to keep them, and observe them diligently, they must be published.

That being warrantable and commendable to be done by Rulers, Gods Deputies, that was done by God and his Prophets, and by Christ and his Apostles, who in several dispensations of those very Rules made a new publication. And for Rules of Actions in their nature, Indifferent, no man can question but they must be determined, to avoid *Controversies* and settle *Peace*; and when so determined, it is but reasonable there should be an open promulgation. When by so doing, the Subject, from the declared Judgment of his Governours who is set over him for good, must certainly be inclined to a ready Obedience.

Transgression of Laws Natural, published, being a double Transgression, when the Offender, *Audet non tantum malum, sed malum vetitum Committere*. He is impudent that *neglects* and *rebels*, and left without excuse; for if the Laws had been concealed they might have pleaded *ignorance*, but being promulged and openly known, the Transgressor is *inexcusable*, and therefore his sin remaineth. Let any indifferent man then be Judge, if the Refractory *Disobedience* of some unperswasible Tempers amidst us be not absolutely inexcusable, when in
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our Laws nothing Injust is injoynd; nothing determined but was *deliberated*, nothing established but was *promulged*.

Certainly, as it is the Governours, or Rulers duty, for the good of the Society, thus to fix and establish Laws; so it is the Subjects duty, to submit willingly to those Laws thus fixed accordingly.

S E C T. VI.

6. **G**overnours are to be submitted unto by the Subjects of that Society over which they are Constituted; for *Governours* and *Subjects* are Relatives, *Mutuo se ponunt*, &c. They come both to their Relations by the same Constitution, and what appoints some of the Society to *command* and *direct*, appoints others in the same Society to *submit* and *obey*; and very rarely can any Government be instanced, but *Oaths* were given and *Subscriptions* taken, and men several waies obliged themselves to consent and submit to their Governours, in their Administration, and to acquiesce in their Determinations and Constitutions. So that *Submission* is not an outward honour and reverence to their Persons in Offices and Dignity, but conformity to *Directions* of Governours, and *obedience* to their lawful Commands, and just Rules delivered by them for Publick good.

And as *St. Paul*, so *St. Peter* to his dispersed *Hebrews*, least they should be prejudiced from a specious pretence of *Liberty*, and cast off all yokes of Service, and break off all bonds of Obedience, Authoritatively commands them, to shew the honesty of their Conversation by a chearful *submission* to the Just Commands of Lawful Governours, as *1 Pet. 2. 13.* when he enjoyns them to *submit to every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake.* Just Commands I advisedly put in, for that is *ἀντιστοίχως*, what is just and reasonable, and tends directly to the designed End that is *Humane*, and to such an Ordinance they are to submit for the Lords sake.

Now Commands and Actions of Governours are of things and actions of two sorts, either *Natural* or *Indifferent*.

Natural would be binding if no Constitution; but Rulers seeing mens averfeness and backwardness to what is apparently good, out of love and care to their Peoples welfare put a new life, and revive even those Laws by a new publication, to stir up the Peoples attention to them, and observance of them; by which course their *Obligation* is not remitted but intended. And no Subject but shews his perverse and rebellious Temper that dare think and say, That those Rules are less lawful, or less binding, because a Lawful Authority hath revived them, and upon the fore-mentioned necessity and Reasons hath afresh enjoyned them.

Other Actions are of an *Indifferent nature*, neither good nor bad of themselves, yet must be determined by Governours, to prevent *Dissension*, and
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settle *Peace*, the ground and foundation of all Temporal blessings, that make mens lives comfortable in any Society. And soberly let it be considered, and the morality of the fifth Commandment, the Rulers *Authority* and Subjects *Obedience* is plainly discovered, by his voluntary Submission to Commands and Ordinances of this nature, and determinations of things in their own nature indifferent. For if the matter be unlawful that is unlawful by Commands of Superiours, then *Daniel's Vetitum est* is sufficient, *We are not careful— It is better to obey God than Man.* If the thing be profitable, thou servest thy own turn, thy own Interest, rather than obeyest thy Ruler. If the thing be intrinsically Just, thou art obliged to do that although not enjoyned it. So the truth is, the Rulers Authority, and Subjects sincere Submission, is chiefly seen by his *Obedience* to those Commands which enjoyn things that are of their own nature Indifferent. Where neither the Nature of the thing, nor the Subjects Reason or Profit is convincing, nor any other by-Respect induceth him to Obedience. And thy *submission* to those things is the clearest evidence of thy subjection to Higher Powers, which is undoubtedly according to the Law of Nature, and Will of Christ.

And if thou dost not abide according to thy former Consent to such Determinations of thy Rulers, and submit to them, it is a plain discovery of some prejudice and disaffection to thy Ruler, that thou thinkest meanly of his *wisdom*, or suspectest his *goodness*, or despisest his *Authority*: That thou esteemest thy self *wiser*, *better* and *Greater* than he

that is set over thee: When thou darest in prejudice, wilfully oppose thy own misguided Perswasion against the sober, well-grounded Determination of thy Governour, which was fixed to minister to *Peace*. And now consider, what thou dost that thou maist enjoy thy own obstinate Perswasion, thou wilt lose thy Peace; and certainly, thy gratifying thy Humour will not countervail the loss of thy Peace, besides the gauling Guilt of thy wilful Disobedience, when by the Light of Nature, as well as by the Will of Christ, thou art obliged to submit to the *Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake; whether of the King, as supream, &c.* Thou art from thy heart to be subject to their Determinations not only for *wrath*, but for *Conscience sake*; for though the Law or Ordinance be *Humane*, yet thy obligation is *Divine*.

The Law may be positive, and voluntary of things in their own nature Indifferent, yet thy *Submission* must be natural to just Determinations, and according to the Law of Nature and Rules of Christ, as certainly as there is any Morality in the fifth Commandement, or that Peter was an Apostle and wrote the Will of Christ, who bids us *submit to every humane Ordinance for the Lords sake*.

When but two sorts of Laws, some *Natural*, that are predetermined, but are enlivened and further confirmed, others *Voluntary* or *Positive*, that when not unjust, receive their being, constituting, and ratifying, from their promulgation by Governours. To both these Subjects are to submit, not only for *wrath*, but for *Conscience sake*. And for us of this Nation, when God hath manifested his approbation

probation and good-liking to our Governours and Government by his wonderful Restauration, it were unworthy to think such Ingratitude could be taxed, That either the *Governours* should be remiss in fixing Just Laws for right Ruling, or that Reasonable *Subjeſts* should be backward in ready Obeying.

Conclude we then this Point as to our selves, That our Governours of *England* being appointed for the good of the Nation, and having established and published Laws, Our Subjects are bound to submit to those Laws accordingly.



C H A P. III.

*The first care of Governours should be, by
Laws, to oblige their Subjects generally,
to a Publick exercise of Religion.*

Section,

- I. *The first care and main end of Governours
should be, to instil and imprint an esteem,
love and care of Religion in their People.*
- II. *Governours are to endeavour among their
Subjects, to promote the outward exercise
of Religion.*
- III. *Governours are to take care, that the exer-
cise of Religion among their Subjects be
Publick and Universal.*

S E C T. I.

The first care and main end of Governours should be, to instil and imprint an esteem, love and care of Religion in their People.

I. **F**OR it being sufficiently proved, That Governours in their Offices are chiefly to aim at, and contrive for the general good of the People under them, that they may live peaceably and happily, and because the means nearest to that end must be *Religion*, their next care (to compass this End) must be to imprint in the minds of the People, an *esteem* and *love* of Religion, as the directest way to their Happiness.

That naturally every man hath a sense of a Deity, is beyond Controversie. He sees and observes himself, and all things visible, to be made and upheld by an Invisible Power, and governed and disposed by a more excellent wisdom and discretion. From the Creation and Order of things that are made, men by natural Reason may come to the knowledge of a Being not made and independent: That He is a *Spirit*, *Supream*, *Infinite*, *Omnipotent*, *necessarily Eternal*, *All-sufficient*, and incomprehensibly *transcendent* in all Perfections, from the light of Reason (if not clouded) He must be *acknowledged*, and being thus acknowledged he must be *worshipped*. It was not only at *Athens* but all the World over, That the God that Made
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the World ought to be worshipped ; That this Infinite Being may not be offended but pleased ; and that his poor Creatures may escape the dreadful and intollerable effects of his Anger who is *Almighty*, and gain all the ineffable contentments of his Love who is *All-sufficient*, must be the main design of Rational men.

Now to compass this End , certainly *Religion* and the *worship of G O D* must be the way. And, what is Religion? *It is a respectful observance of that Majesty which is to be reverently adored ; A due respect of the rational Creature to the Supream Being.* This *Respect* consists in three things:

1. In high apprehensions and estimation of Gods infinite Excellencies and Perfections. *To think highly and honourably of God, is the beginning of Piety and Religion.* Aug.

2. In suitable Affections. Having rightly esteemed God as the best and greatest of Beings , that we *fear* him as the Greatest, and *love* him as the Best, is another part of that *Respect* we owe to him.

3. In a suitable signification of both. Man being created for Society , and naturally inclining to joyn himself to others , and seeing in the state we are in, we cannot comfortably hold any Communion but by a sensible signification of our Apprehensions and Affections ; That we give Attestation of these things must needs be natural and necessary.

And these Sentiments of the necessity and benefit of *Religion* all People have had from the beginning. All Nations were ever perswaded , that they should be most Prosperous who were most Religious.

Religious. No People so Barbarous, but they gave joyntly their significations of *observance*, and *piety* and *respect* to him they accounted Supream. Hence they made some testifications and acknowledgments by *Sacrifices*, and other Religious Rites, to appease and make that Deity they adored propitious and gracious. And though all Nations and People had originally and naturally received these impressions and perswasions of the necessity and commodiousness of *Religion*, yet we never read nor heard of any Famous Governours, but they have revived and cleared these Old Impressions by new Laws and Injunctions.

And whereas this care of implanting *Religion* in the minds of the People for their good, is to be found in all Governours that improve their Reason to right Ends in the discharge of their Offices, yet this Care ought to be chiefly and eminently in those Governours, that, besides the light of Reason, have from the publication of the Gospel a most clear discovery of the infinite Excellencies and Perfections of God, and of that true Religion which ties men to God, which teaches whom, and how we ought to worship. For if to have God Infinite appeased to us, and pleased with us, be mans ultimate End, and this End is no otherwise attainable than by Religion, most easily attainable by the best and truest, and that is the Religion prescribed to us in the Gospel; certainly, that our Rulers should command an observance of that Religion of the *Gospel* is very agreeable to the end of their Constitution, and to their Profession of being *Christians*.

The

The first design of a Ruler, set over the People for their good, is to take care for what is best; and the care of *Religion* is the best Care men can have in this World. *Hear, O ye Kings, understand and learn ye that are Judges of the Earth.* Men must give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsars; and Cæsar himself must give unto God the things that are Gods. The Jewish Kings had the Book of the *Law* delivered to them, and our Kings the Book of the *Gospel*, at their Inauguration.

If we consider the effects of Religion, the sweet fruits of it in our own private condition, or more publick relation, that Blessedness which at all times and every where does accompany her, we cannot wonder, that it should be our own, and the Rulers care to promote and advance Religion. There is a delight and great content that arises from all holy *employments*, and a blessedness inseparable from all holy *affections*. *Light is shewn for the righteous, and joy for them that are true of heart.* Poverty of spirit entitles to the Kingdom of Heaven, mourning to comfort, *hungering and thirsting after righteousness* attended with satisfaction and fulness; *the pure in heart* are nearer to the sight of God. Piety brings the best contentment, and the surest gain; *Her waies are waies of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* It is this, without which we cannot be fit for any Society: He cannot truly love his Neighbour, that does not honour and love God; he cannot be faithful and honest, he cannot be sweet and kind, and easie to others.

And now be your own Judges, you the prophane and irreligious men of these Times, whose wit (the thing

thing you so much pretend to) shews it self in nothing but in scoffing at Religion, and in making it a trick of State to preserve Peace and Order. Is it not just and reasonable, that you should suffer the results of your own Judgment, be banished out of all Society, be excluded from the protection of a well-ordered Government; seeing you would laugh that out of the World which your selves confess unawares to be so conducive to the preservation of it?

S E C T. II.

Governours are to endeavour amongst their Subjects, to promote the outward exercise of Religion.

THE outward exercise of Religion is natural to us, while we are conversant on Earth: For, as it is natural to worship and serve God (who discerns the thoughts, intentions and affections) with our *Spirits*; so it is Natural, to give some external and sensible demonstrations of that inward Devotion, that, while we converse with men, we may give them satisfaction and evidence of our being *Religious*. And, among men, the Ruler ought before all to be satisfied, that he may with chearfulness and pleasure administer his office, and give up his account with joy, as having not watched for the good of his People in vain.

Now, the thoughts of the Subject are not under the Rulers cognizance; He can judge only by the outward acts. God alone knows effects by causes;

We

We no otherwise know Causes than by Effects, Fire by *heat*, the Sun by *light*, and Life by *motion*, Religion by *exercise*, and Affection by *outward significations*. And we are to make these sensible Demonstrations, not only for the satisfaction of others, but also for the glory of God; whom as we are to glorifie with all the faculties of our Souls, to know and consider his Excellencies with our *understandings*, to submit to, and obey him in our *Wills*; so we are to worship him with our *Bodies*, our *hands* to be lifted up to him, our *Eyes* to wait on him, our *Ears* to hear him, and our *Tongues* to praise him.

The necessity of this outward exercise of Religion appears farther, from our being made not to be alone but for Society: And no Society can be maintained without an outward Communication. The acknowledgment of this we may by a very easie consequence force from those Men, that profess to be so much against it; who assemble together, and in their Assemblies use long Prayers, and prolix Preachings, without which exercises and visible attendances, they think they cannot evidence themselves Religious, with satisfaction either to themselves or others.

Were we indeed in the state of *Angels*, and able to communicate our thoughts by invilible species, and by our bare volitions; then (and not till then) we might upon the pretence of a true heart, and a good disposition of mind content our selves and our Neighbours. In the mean time, it is natural in all things, to give some sensible indication of our thoughts, and to signifie to others, how we are affected

affected within : *Bodies* and *Souls*, whilst united together , must needs have an influence upon one another ; A distracted mind has a lowring brow, and a merry heart has a chearful countenance. By this outward exercise of Religion we raise an esteem and love of Religion, in our selves, and in others.

1. In our selves. For we grow into a love of, and delight in that thing we daily converse with ; it becomes easie and familiar to us. Acts become Habits, and are rooted fast by a frequent repetition. Strength is encreased by use , and love of Religion by exercise.

2. In others. For man is prone to Imitation, and hastily follows Example. We do many things for no other reason , but because others do them.

And here we must needs be amazed at the unreasonable speeches of *Quakers*, and others, who, because God is a *Spirit*, and the Gospel requires a worship in *spirit* , will have God to disregard *externals*, and not to think himself glorified by outward Services. Wild principles, mad delusions, fitted to destroy all Government , and to make all Christian Conversation unnecessary. For, if God accept not *external actions* , when agreeable to the Law , and be not displeased with them, when disagreeable ; if God himself be so unconcerned, we have little reason to take any care in our Actions. But we are to remember, that the Laws of the Gospel are of two sorts ; some relating to the intentions and affections , and actions *spiritual* and *internal* ; these Laws tend to the private peace of a man, and his happiness within himself. Other Laws respecting the outward words and actions, and

and designing to make a man happy in *Society* and *Conversation*, and to fit him to do things to the edification and comfort of others, and to the honour of *Christianity*.

S E C T. III.

Governours are to take care, that the exercise of Religion among their Subjects be Publick and Universal.

I. **P**ublick. Only of things done in Publick can the Governour take cognizance of; and certainly, no wise Magistrate did ever make a Law concerning those things, which he could have no knowledge of afterwards, whether they were done or no. The Worship of God (excepting times of Persecution, and such necessities) was ever *publick*, since there was any at all. Hence all people had their Altars or Groves, their Mountains or Vallies, their Orbs, Tabernacles or Temples, where they all met at set times, and their fixed *Sacrifices*, *Prayers*, and *Religious performances*, wherein they all joyned at their meetings. And therefore, as this exercise of Religion must be *Publick*, so must it be,

2. *Universal*. The Father naturally cares for the welfare of every Child; Gods *Providence* is over all his Creatures for their good; And it is the care of his *Deputies*, to provide for the welfare and happiness of all their Subjects.

Now

Now if *Religion* be the only thing that can make men happy (as it is proved) the Governour cannot compass his End (which is, *to procure the happiness of his Subjects*) but by enjoining the Exercise of Religion to be Universal.



CHAP. IV.

Our Governours of our Church of England have done well to injoyn every Believing Subject, an open Profession of his Faith in his respective Congregation.

The particulars incident to this Head are Four.

- I. *We are to consider and agree what FAITH is.*
- II. *That of that Faith there ought to be Profession.*
- III. *That Profession ought to be made by every Believer.*
- IV. *This is to be done in respective Congregations.*

SECT. I.

- I. **O**ur Governours are not only as Gods Deputies, under the *Law of Nature*, to injoyn their Subjects the Care of Religion, but as Deputies of Christ under a more perfect Law,

Law, revealed by him in this last dispensation, to injoin their Subjects the right Exercise of true Religion prescribed in the *Gospel*, which he published to fulfil the Law of Nature, that man might come to that Happiness for which he was created and designed. And this I understand to be the most proper Notion of *Faith*, viz. The true Religion well ordered, and rightly modified by *Gospel* Rules, by the right Exercise whereof we worship and serve God acceptably; so that *whatsoever is not of Faith is sin*, and *without Faith it is impossible to please God*.

For being Baptized into the obedience of the *Gospel*, of which obedience *Baptism* represents our Profession, we ought to have a firm Perswasion of the goodness and reasonableness, not only of the Duties in the *Gospel* prescribed, but of our conformity to those Prescriptions, for the carrying on that true and undetiled Religion wherewith God is well pleased.

So that *Faith* is the *Gospel* grace, that *teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily, righteously and soberly in this present world*. And *Believing* is a comprehensive Duty, and signifies not only a tacit assent to Evangelical Rules, as *true and warrantable*, as a barren act of the Understanding; but a firm election and perswasion of these Rules as *good and comfortable*, and implies a firm purposing and resolving of a total *Gospel* Obedience.

I heartily pity and bewail, the *differences* and *distances* that are to be seen among Professed Believers in this Nation; and, upon serious Consideration

ration, I fully perswade my self, there is nothing contributes more to the being and continuance of our *Division*, than a general rashness and injudiciousness; When men run away with some sudden *partial Notions*, and *slight Apprehensions* of things of great necessity, and deserved esteem in the World; and do not seriously and discursively make a right Judgment, and agree of the full sense and meaning of them as they import.

To instance in some few particulars, which is easie for any to observe.

The *Gospel*, most say, they highly esteem; and yet we cannot but observe, that most snatch and run away with it as a *promise of Mercy*, but never regard it as a *rule of Duty*, and direction of an holy life.

The *two Sacraments* are Seals of the Covenant betwixt God and us; and most men are very heedful at Receiving them, that God may seal to them *Remission of sins*, and never regard that at the same time they covenant under Seal, to yield *Obedience to God*.

The *Blood of Christ* is precious, and its shedding to be had in everlasting remembrance; but when most men most solemnly remember it, this Consideration contents them, *That Christs Blood was shed for our Redemption, for remission of sins, to reconcile God to man, &c.* When we should think how this *Blood-shedding* was, That men might be reconciled to God, and be redeemed from an *unclean conversation*, and by this sprinkling be sanctified and *purged from dead works to serve the living God*, Heb. 9. 13, 14.

Graces and gifts of the Spirit we justly value and admire; but is it not too apparent men are taken up with gifts of *Edification*, and pass by gifts and true grace of *Sanctification*; so that if a man be but ready in a Scripture phrase, hath gotten a voluble Tongue, a round expression, &c. he gets the name and repute of a *Saint* immediately. But the exercise of *Piety and Charity*, which are the certain evidences of true Sanctity; These things stand by neglected and despised.

I might instance in several things that we frame the same Consideration of. If we give God but a piece of a Duty, we think a *maimed and imperfect sacrifice* will content him, and expiate and satisfie him, and excuse all our defects and enormities; and with gross mistakes we see evidently men delude and deceive themselves in this untoward generation.

And although in many things our *mistakes* of these sorts hasten our irreligious *miscarriages*, yet in nothing are they more manifest than in the nature of *Faith*. From all Christians that make any profession of the true Religion, we shall hear these pretences, That *they live by Faith, walk by Faith, are justified by Faith, are saved by Faith, &c.* And yet for all this noise we hear of these things, we can see but few that make a true judgment, or have a right understanding of the full meaning of the *real Faith in Christ, or Faith of the Gospel.*

Its undeniably true, that without believing that supernatural Truth of *Christs Merits* for our pardon and remission of sins, there can be no peace
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for men, but they must die and consume in the *guilt* of their Transgressions. It is certainly true, that Christ our *High Priest* put away sins by the sacrifice of himself: but when Christ our designed Mediatour was *King* and *Prophet* as well as *Priest*. It is not barely a fruitless relying, or a lazy recumbency on Christs Merits, as our *Priest* only; but our believing his Laws and Directions he left his Church, as a *King*: the observing his Counsels and Injunctions he gave as a *Prophet*, is necessary to make up that *Faith*, which will bring us to the end of our *Hope*, which is the salvation of our souls.

It's undeniably true, that in the Gospel are given exceeding great and precious Promises of *Mercies* and *Salvation*, upon which God hath caused us to hope; yet when these Promises are not *absolute* but *conditional*, upon our conformity to those Rules of Duty that are prescribed, unless we be carried on to the practice of those things required, that pertain to life and godliness, we cannot be rationally concluded to have that *Faith* in the Gospel in us, which will certainly bring us to that *happiness* which we openly design and expect.

And, upon a serious inquiry, we cannot conclude any of the *Theological Graces* to be truly infused into any man, unless they discover themselves by their operations. *Love* is practical, and works, where seated, a care of keeping Commandements. *Hope* is purifying; He that hath hope of heaven is *heavenly*, and *purifieth himself as God is pure*: And *Faith* it self works by *Love*, and *Love* by *Obedience*.

This then is that *precious Faith* we should contend for, as becometh Saints. In this we should strive to continue in, grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel.

All these things are premised, that the Reader may easily conclude, what we plainly understand by that *Faith* which the Ruler hath religiously enjoined, and the Subject is bound willingly to maintain, namely, *a sincere and a firm purpose of mind, of adhering and conforming to the Rules of the Gospel, by a total Obedience.*

He that Believes thus shall not be ashamed, when *Faith* makes him have respect to all Evangelical Commandments.

logically concluded to have that Faith in the Gospel in us, which will certainly bring us to that blessed which we openly design and expect.

And, upon a reflection, we cannot conclude any of the Theological Virtues to be truly infused in to any man, unless they discover themselves by their operations. There is practical, and works, where

keeping Commandments. Hope is purifying. He that hath hope of heaven is pure and faithful. And I will work by Love, and I will love by God's

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SECT.

S E C T. II.

Of this Faith there must be Profession.

Naturally we are to look of our selves as related to Society, so that of our internal Piety there must be an external signification, intending not only Gods glory by settling our private Peace, but by promoting our Neighbours good and edification. So that as care must be had by us of *Religion*, so of its *Exercise*; and as of *Faith*, so of *Profession* of Faith. And this is required by the Gospel evidently, when it is enjoyn'd, That *Christ be confessed before men*; that all that by *Baptism* are consecrated to the obedience of the Gospel, *hold fast the Profession of their faith without wavering.*

Ὁμολογία is sometimes rendered *Confession*, sometimes *Profession*, in that they agree either of them, it is frankly and openly to declare what we hold in matters of *Religion*, to justify and bear witness to any *Truth* of the Gospel, be they either *supernatural* or *natural* Priviledges or Mercies promised, or Services or Duties enjoyn'd; yea, the offering the *sacrifice of Praise to God continually*, that is, the fruit of our Lips, is explained by an Holy Author to be *Ὁμολογία*, Heb. 13. 15. a giving thanks, or confessing to his Name.

Profession of Faith we understand to be, a voluntary and open declaring (amidst the Society in which incorporated) of our free and full consent in believing the Gospel, not only the Mercies pro-

mised, but *Duties* injoyn'd , and that we assent to them all, not only as true and infallible, but also as good and comfortable ; and a declaring of our desires , study and care to observe them accordingly.

An express signifying of *Profession of Faith*, is, a declaring of our resolution of Evangelical Obedience, our assenting and adhering to the right Exercise of true Religion as prescribed in the Gospel.

The work of *Faith* and *Religion* is not wholly to be done within , but many *externals* are necessary and essential, for constituting a visible Church, she is to be *a light upon an Hill*.

Every *Believer* is to shine as *lights in the World*, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and that can only discern *Externals*. Therefore the *Believers outward* carriage and deportment, and converse must be so ordered like *lights* , to the enlightning and warming the blind and benumbed World.

Outwardly we are to manage our selves, as we may direct, strengthen, and comfort our Neighbour, *Poverty of spirit, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, Purity of heart, &c.* These are Duties of the first rank, and primarily to be taken care of, to present our selves so as to be approved by our God. *These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

For there be many *external Duties* necessary for Communion, amidst the society of the Faithful, that must not be omitted and refused, as *Preaching and bearing the Word ; Administring and receiving* the

the Sacraments ; *meeting* and *assembling* together in those Assemblies ; mutual *exhortations* and *provocation* to good Works ; *confession* of Sins , of Thanks ; declared *resolutions* as well as *desires* of Holiness, and other Duties ; all comprehended in *profession of Faith*. These are all *External*, yea, are all Gospel Duties , and have been, and will be used in the Church of Christ.

Thus the Church of God among the *Jews*, that met at the Ark and Temple in *Jerusalem*, *The Tribes went up*, for the *Testimony of Israel* , to give thanks to the Name of the Lord ; and these were *External*.

Thus the Church of Christ, united under the faith of the Gospel , had their *Praying* , *preaching* the new Law , *singing* of Hymns , while Christ continued on Earth amongst them : And when gone up to Heaven , *they continued in Assembling*, and *breaking of Bread*, and *Prayers*. They had their Liturgies and publick Administrations, not only in works of *Charity* but works of *Piety*. They had their sacrifices of *Praise*, the fruit of their lips, and *giving thanks to the Name of the Lord*. They had their *propheying at Church* at *Corinth* , and what was to be done by the Church on Earth. They had *Visions* of the Examples to lead them, from the Angels both in Earth and Heaven. Neither can a visible Church or Society think to be continued without *open profession* and *declaration*.

And in the Gospel ; They that worshipped God in their *spirits*, were ready to bow their *knees* to him. They that *knew* God, made their *acknowledgment*.

ledgment. They that believed in their heart, for their *Righteousness*, made *confession* with their mouths, to help on their own and others *salvation*.

Thus by Presidents of *Saints* on *Earth*, and *Angels* in *Heaven*, the Gospel of Christ doth lead his Church as the Law of Nature directs it, not only to Religion but its *exercise*, nor the Gospel only to Faith, but the *profession* of Faith; that every Member united to that visible Society of *Believers*, must hold the *profession* of his Faith without *wavering*.

And there's the next particular; The injunction of what both *Nature* and the *Gospel* directs us unto, is not unlawful but necessary, and both require that of our Faith we should make *Profession*; and it is very good, that *Rulers* from their *Subjects* require the same.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

Every particular Believing Subject ought to be, in-joyn'd to this open profession of Faith.

Profession of *Faith* is an essential of the visible Church, and none can be concluded in the Judgment of men, of the visible Church, that doth not make profession of Faith.

The *visible Church* is not a Company but a Society, and what makes the Society a *Church* is profession of Faith. Every one is to evidence himself of this Society; if he will claim right to the *Priviledges* of a Society, he must perform the *offices* and *duties*, and be diligent in the Ministration of the Society.

A Minister may gather a Company, but he cannot gather a Church, nor make them to be so by his own single confession. Every man that will approve himself of the Church, must not only give a tacit, but an expresse consent by an open *Profession*. This is necessary for constituting every man in *Church-membership*, and this is rationally required and injoyn'd of Christian Governours, to their Believing Subjects, for their own and Subjects satisfaction.

This concerns the whole Congregation, and is to be done not only by the *Clergy* but *Laity*, not only *Priest* but *People*, not only *Men* but *Women*, nor only they that are grown up, but *Children*. Out of the mouth of *Babes* and *Sucklings*, God thus hath
his

his *praise* perfected; and in his Temple, when met for Gods worship, *every one must speak for his Honour*, of such as have received the Faith of the Gospel.

And this we are led unto by the eminent Examples of *Angels* and *Saints*, who served and pleased God, that Church triumphant in Heaven. Thus when we knew not where we were, before the foundations of the Earth were laid, every Angel signified his *consent* and *delight* he had in the enjoyment of God; *Job 38.7. All those Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.* No Dignity exempted any of those from Duty; They all sang together, they all shouted together for joy.

And the multitude of that heavenly Host, that appeared to the *Shepherds*, commended this practice to every particular Saint, it being observed and recorded for an imitation, that every one was *praising God, and saying, Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men*, Luke 2.13, 14.

And the *Vision* that St. *John* recorded, that glorious Divine that now is equal if not above Angels, is for direction and imitation of us, and others, to the end of the World; and what he heard, *Revel. 5. 11, 12, 13. And I beheld and heard the voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the Beasts, and the Elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands, crying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, &c. and every Creature which is in Heaven heard I saying, Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power, &c.* Certainly this was recorded to instruct us, that this ought to be the duty of every particular Saint on Earth, which does the work

work of every *Saint* and *Angel* in Heaven. That every man of Christs Temple below, as well as of that above, should speak to his Honour, set forth his Praise.

And thus they thought it, and practiced the *Apostles* and *Disciples* of Christ in their first meeting, who made confession of their Faith in that Article of the Resurrection, *Luke* 24. 33, 34. not only the *Eleven*, but *they that were with them were saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.* The *Disciples* come from *Emmaus*, were they silent? *They told what things were done in the way, and how he was known by breaking of Bread.* And thus they continued speaking till Christ came among them.

Acts 13. 2, 3. the Church met together at *Antioch*, and there we find them met at their Liturgy; there was a publick ministration they all agreed in: That *ministring* was not touching the People, then it would have been $\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \lambda\alpha\acute{o}\varsigma$, but it was $\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \kappa\upsilon\epsilon\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$, something done for Gods honour and service, and it was *Fasting* and *Praying*.

To instance in one more, *1 Cor.* 14. 24. they were all *Prophefying*. In their holy Assemblies at *Corinth* the Apostle *St. Paul* supposeth, that there was a business they were all imployed in; it is set forth in the word *Prophefying*, what can we in reason understand by that word? Sure it was not *Preaching*, for if all were preaching, who could be hearing. It was not *fore-telling things to come*; this was given about that time to some extraordinarily, upon the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, but not commonly or generally to every Believer. It was not extatical effusion from *gifts of Tongue*, given to all to speak; that was not given to all, and the Unbeliever

liever, if he upon his coming in had found them all thus busied would have accounted them mad; but Laity and Clergy Women as well as men might be imployed in this *Prophefying*.

But this work every Believer was busie about, it must be therefore some open and plain declaration, either of some Article or Articles of *Religion*, or some acknowledgment of the *divine Perfections*, or some speaking freely in *praising* of God, or *praying* unto him; for they were publickly ministring to the Lord, they were falling down and worshipping him, as the Apostle supposeth, *that* (being convinced by the joynt actual concurrence of every Believer) *the Unbeliever coming in, would fall down and worship God with them, saying, of a truth God was in the midst of them.*

He supposeth it done by the Believers and Saints at *Corinth*, what he desired might be done by the Saints at *Jerusalem*; that they did not decline their Assembling themselves together for *Religious* purposes, nor in their Assembling did any one decline the *profession* of his Faith, which every one was to hold fast without wavering.

In probability there was some Liturgy they agreed in at *Corinth*, as there was among the Believers at *Jerusalem*, and at *Antioch* and *Alexandria*, and every Believer accounted himself obliged to give his attendance on it, and joynt concurrence with it, to the *honour* and *worship* of God. Every one offered a Sacrifice not *private* or *mental*, which was not discernable by man, but *vocal*, the fruit of his lips, and Unbeliever might sensibly perceive it; and this tended to the service of God though *external*,

ternal, and well they were assured, that *with such Sacrifices* (which was every Christians duty to offer) when they were offered, *God was well pleased.*

Thus every Believer by the practice of the Church of Christ, in purest times, is led to *profession of Faith*, and I appeal to any mans Reason or Experience to determine, if he be a Christian, whether upon a wilful omission of this Duty any true Believer can rest satisfied.

For if I be a sincere Believer, I can never satisfy my self, unless, as I owe, so I give all unto Gods glory: The Hypocrite will to his power keep back something, but the Christian which is sincerely *holy* will give all. He knows and considers that his Body is *created, redeemed, sanctified*, and shall be *glorified*, to present them a living sacrifice to God, is but *reasonable service*. That it is not a gift but a debt, he owes and is bound to pay, that as with his Soul he is to *know* God and *love* him, so he is to offer his Tongue to *praise* God, and his Body to *worship* him.

But if I be diligent in the *Profession* of my Faith, I forthwith feel a content and satisfaction attending and accompanying my *holy* employments, and a delightful *pleasantness* spreads it self over my Soul, while my Body is busied in *religious* exercises. Its the most *relishing* meat and drink for Gods Children thus to do their Fathers will, and these *Services* are their greatest freedom. Those that are beloved of God, and after his own heart, feel their Souls *satisfied as with marrow and fatness*, while their Mouths *freely praise him with joyful lips.*
No

No such *full content* as in those exercises of Godliness, which hath the greatest profession of *delight* in this life, and the most certain expectation of those *full joyes* that are to come.

Thus we most please our selves, and we best satisfy our Neighbours, in whatsoever Relation he respects us in the practice of *Holiness*, which directly tends to true Happiness. Our *Father*, the *Magistrate*, the *Minister*, our *Equals*, are all solicitous to know and be assured of our *pious* and *holy* inclinations; and when they can perceive they have not watched over us nor laboured in vain, they are most delighted and best pleased.

Now our Relations are not to be satisfied in the state we are in, with probable conjectures of our meanings and intentions, but they must have clear and significant expression of our minds and intentions, either by *words* or *actions*.

A sullen *silence* cannot content us in our Contracts, but we must have sensible assurance of our mutual *assent* or *refusal*. In our Secular Trafficks and Commerces, we cannot carry on our Bargains but by external signification: And as in *Temporal* so in *Spiritual* Covenants, there is a necessity of these things when no communion can be held without them. We cannot be mutually pleased with mutual assurances of our purposes, to stand firm to the Faith of the Gospel, without an open *declaration*; unless every one *hold forth the profession of his Faith without wavering*.

There can be no contenting assurance of any persons continuing a Member of a visible Church, without *profession of Faith* in Service or Sacrament;
Hearing

Hearing the Word preach'd only is no sufficient evidence; I am in charity to believe the *Minister* to be a good man, because he signifies his pious intentions by Religious expressions: But I cannot in reason conclude the Hearer so long as he saies nothing. If People wanted nothing but *Knowledge*, *Conversion*, or *Faith*, if *ignorant* or *unconverted*, I could excuse this *boulimy* among us, and it were far more tolerable that people mind only Sermons: But when People are *knowing* and *converted*, *baptized* and *ingaged* in Profession, certainly it were more truly Religious to spend some time in *doing* as well as *hearing*, to shew they have not heard in vain, but that they have got this *Faith* they so greedily heard for, by holding forth the *profession* of it, &c.

By Hearing constantly, I in charity conclude thou desirest to be good, thou wouldst get *Faith*; but if *Hearing* is all, how can I without rashness judge that thou art *good*, or hast got *Faith*, which is not evident to me without thy *Profession*.

It is a painted, no real Fire, that hath neither *light* nor *heat*: It is a Stock, a Log, not a living Tree, that hath neither *leaves* nor *fruit*: It is a Carcase, not a living Body, that hath neither *words* nor *motion*: It is Presumption, and no living Faith, that is not signified by *Profession*.

And now with all meekness, I beseech those that separate from us, seriously to consider this undoubted Truth, That the visible certain sign of any Companies or Persons, being indeed of the Catholick Church that is Militant, is the Peoples *Confession of Faith* in Service and Sacraments.

Since therefore *Profession of Faith* is of such necessity, and hath so great an influence to please both our selves and others, and is a duty and service, by Gospel Rules, incumbent to every Christian, we may truly conclude, That the Christian Magistrate may and ought to injoyn *an open Profession of Faith* to each believing Subject in his respective Congregation.

S E C T. IV.

Every one is to make profession of his Faith, and the best time and place to do it in, are in respective Congregations, and the Magistrate is to injoyn every one, &c.

4. **T**hat there should be meeting and assembling of Congregations, must be adjudged expedient and necessary for the imparting and promoting what is good and comfortable, and the preventing or removing of what is hurtful or inconvenient, which things cannot be hoped for, or compassed, by *Singularity or Separation*. And, that this is confessed, is evident from the general practice of all Cities and Nations that professed any Religion, were it true or false, and by the practice of ordinary Men, without any respect to Religion, who agree to meet in *Markets, Fairs, Exchanges, Walks*, for Temporal ends above-said. And

And if general Meetings be rationally concluded, to be necessary for imparting things *Temporal*, then they must be concluded also natural and necessary for imparting things *Spiritual*.

And for any one wilfully and perversly to decline these Meetings, lawfully appointed, must be a sin, being prohibited by the Gospel, when the *Hebrews* are commanded not to *forsake the Assembling of themselves together*, as the manner of some is, *Heb. 10. 25.* because such Meetings are appointed and designed to advance the exercise of Piety and Religion.

Such Congregations of *Believers* as respect the Worship and Service of God, are the Congregations we mean, and the Believer is to discharge his duty of *Profession* in the midst of them.

God, Nature and Grace, doth not delight to do any thing in vain, and all voluntary Agents free-liest exert their kindly operations upon such Objects, as may be influential upon them for good, and are in capacity to receive the said Operations.

Confession of Faith is not expected, when not called to it, to be made to *Persecutors*, or *Infidels*, that are professed enemies of the Gospel: where there is more probability of their *Rage*, than *Conversion*, and where there is no hope of advancing Gods *glory*, or our Neighbours *good*; where there is less hope of dying a *Martyr*, than danger of being a Manslayer, where he may seem to conspire with the *Persecutors* to take away his own life.

Mat. 7. 6. By Christs own direction, we are not to cast *holy things to dogs*, nor *pearls to swine*, lest

they trample them under foot, and turn again and rent you. But holy things are properly tendred to holy Men. Our delight to communicate these should be chiefly to the *Saints* of the Earth, and such as pretend at least a desire to excel in vertue; yea, where we may act with *safety* to our selves, and probably with *benefit* to others, there *Confession of Faith* is best made, and that if among a Congregation of Believers.

And for any that stupidly or sottishly sit at home, soaking and smoaking in their Chimney Corners securely, indulging the *sensual* part, and never regard but slight the opportunities of Meetings conveniently, and communicating of holy *apprehensions* and *affections*, for their own and Neighbours comfort. We must look upon them as an *unnatural* sort of Men, and the most lazy kind of the beasts of the people, who industriously study to be useless, and to neglect their own and the general good of the Neighbourhood, which they are obliged to further and maintain. And, if they have sharp *goads* and *lashes*, to prick them or quicken them vigorously to move under that yoke to which they are naturally bound, it is no more than what is just and reasonable, for the good and welfare of the Community, which every particular *Officer* and *Ruler* are concerned to promote and advance.

For *Time* and *Place* of Meeting, that these be determined by the wisdom of the Governours, upon Convenience, as best conducing for the *publick good* of the Society, are things so unquestionable, as I think will meet with no opposition.

Now

Now, that every Christian is bound to attend these Congregations, to advance *Religion*, and propagate the *general good*; he hath lost his Reason as well as Religion that dares deny it.

For what things we find experimentally, either to be believed or done, to be good and comfortable to ones self, we ought to impart and communicate to the good of others; and what *St. Paul* desired to see his Brethren, *Rom. 11.* so we should put in practice, as near as we can, to impart some *Spiritual gifts*, that we may be comforted together with them, by the mutual *faith* both of them and our selves.

For *Temporal* things, such is our unhappy necessity and the baseness of the things, as if we would have any good to our selves, we must have a particular propriety in them and injoyment of them. The more we give others, the less we injoy to our selves.

But for *Spiritual* things, the commoner the better; as there ought not, so there needs not of them be desired an appropriation; our *propriety* is not lost by *Communication*. These things like seeds, they multiply by *scattering*, as fire kindles by *blowing*, so our *Faith* increaseth by *Confession*. *Draw me and we will run after thee.* Holy Souls, when drawn to good things, would have others *good* with them; not so selfish to run alone, but call others to bear them company. *Andrew* calls *Peter*, *Philip* *Nathaniel*, to come to Christ. *David* would have the *Tribes* go up to the *House of the Lord*, to bear testimony with him, and give thanks with him, &c.

And when with him, there he would have others sing with him, rejoyce with him, *fall down* with him, *worship* with him.

So the Author to the *Hebrews*; not forsake meeting, nor in their meeting *mutual Exhortation*, offering *Sacrifice*, *Thanksgiving*, *Profession of Faith*, none excepted or excluded. Every one, without injury to himself, may help on his Neighbour, by *exercise of Religion*, and *profession of Faith*.

And certainly, the declaring and publishing of our firm assent, and soundness of *Faith* and *Devotion*, must help on the *resolution*, and settle the *constancy* of others in the same things. Thus are we props and staies to our staggering and sinking Brethren; and others waxing strong in the Lord, and being strengthened and confirmed in their Faith, grow confident in their Profession also. And *when thou art thyself converted*, thou oughtest also to *strengthen thy Brethren*.

Thus we blow up the coals of *Devotion*, and kindle that *Piety* that breaks out into an *heavenly flame*, to the inlightning and warming both our selves and our Neighbours. Thus we *shine as lights in the World*.

While all agree, and every one is intent in the Congregation on this *Confession*, we stand directly under the influx of Grace. It is the probable way, when we are all thus imployed, to have Christ come and make one of the Company. While in *Via*, like the two Disciples going to *Emmaus*, while we are thus communing, *Jesus* may draw near and go with us. While we are thus speaking, no doubt but Christ is ready to stand in the midst of us,
and

and say, *peace be unto us* ; for so he hath promised, and he is faithful, *That when two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midst of them.*

With this general *Preaching* and *Ministring* usually goes along the *ministration* of the Spirit. And, whosoever would not quench or stint the *Spirit* in this operation to *Holiness*, he ought not to neglect or despise this kind of *Prophecy*ing.

It is a probable way, in the Apostles Judgment, to work upon those that are *without the Church*, and *unconverted*, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. when every one, and all in a believing Congregation are thus *Prophecy*ing, speaking freely, and preaching and confessing Gods *Excellencies* and *Perfections*, and shew our selves reverencing him and believing in him ; when an *Heathen* or *Infidel* come into such a Congregation, *He will fall down and worship God also*, being convinced of the *reasonableness*, *necessity* and *benefit* of the duty, by our respective *Harmony* and *Uniformity*, he will say, *of a truth, verily God is in the midst of us.*

He is worse than *Saul*, that will not thus *prophecie* among the *Prophets*, and seeing others unanimously and devoutly *worshipping* and *confessing* to God, who will not fall down and worship God also.

And while thus like *Elijah*, we are riding up to Heaven in the Chariots of this *holy fire*, it is not improbable that others like *Elisha*, standing by, may have the same *Spirit* resting upon them.

Thus every one that aims at the general *good* of himself and others, be they within the Church, or be they without the Church, is obliged to an open

profession of Faith, in that respective Congregation to which he is associated, that he may be instrumental to draw others to the worship of our glorious God, who before perhaps little regarded him. And that *Governours*, that are to aim at the general good of the Society, should injoyn every *believing Subject* to a duty so extensively beneficial, is so clear that it needs no further demonstration.

In Fine, Our *Governours*, as *Christs* Deputies, who are to Rule by *Christs* new Law, the *Gospel*, have done well to injoyn to their *Believing Subjects* an open *profession of Faith* in their respective Congregations. And, that this Profession ought to be signified by an open *Uniformity*, is our next undertaking.

C H A P.



C H A P. V.

In such Congregations Unity of Faith ought to be signified by an open Uniformity.

Section,

- I. *In a Catholick Church there must be Unity.*
 - II. *In particular Congregations there ought to be Unity of Faith.*
 - III. *That Unity of Faith ought to be signified by an open Uniformity.*
-

S E C T. I.

In a Catholick Church there must be Unity.

TH E Nature of the Church of God is best represented and deciphered unto us under the resemblance of a Body ; As many Members make one Body , so many Believers make one Church. By several Nerves and Sinews the several

several Members are compacted into one Body. By several Laws of the *Gospel*, as so many *Ligaments*, the several Believers are fitly joyned together into one Church; and as many Members compacted by the same *Nerves* are enlivened and guided by *one* Soul, so many Believers joyned together by the same *Laws* are quickned and govern'd by *one* Spirit. *For the Body is not one member but many: For by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* Thus we believe *one Holy Ghost, and one Catholick Church.*

In *Scripture* and *Fathers* many other Figures and Representations we meet of the Church of Christ, which all speak the necessity of *Unity* of several parts for its Constitution. Sometimes we find it compared to *Noahs Ark*, as *Extra Arcam* so *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*: In those great inundations of *sin* and *misery*, wherewith the Earth is overspread, as once out of the *Ark*, so now out of the *Church* there can ordinarily be expected no Salvation. The *Ark* was cemented within and without with *Pitch*, and the *Church* with *Charity*. Sometimes they have likened her to a *Coat*, to *Josephs Coat* that was *polymita*, divers coloured; to *Christs Coat*, *inconsutilis*, without seam, rents or divisions.

In Holy Scripture, in several places, the Church of Christ is compared to an *House* or *Temple*. Many distinct *stones*, and several pieces of *wood*, make up *one* Building, for the protection, entertainment and comfort of the Owner; so many *Believers* make
up

up *one* living Temple, *one* spiritual House, for Christ and his Spirit to dwell and delight in.

As no number of *Planks* can make up a Ship an Ark, without close joynting: No multitude of *Threds* can make a warm Garment, without close weaving: No *Stones* can make up an House, without close cementing: No *Members* or *Parts* can make up a Body, without close compacting; so no number of *Men* can make up a Church without *Conjunction* or *Unity*.

And this the Holy Spirit of Christ intimates unto us in that heavenly Song, *Cant.6.9. My love, my undefiled is but one, the only one of her Mother, the choice one of her that bare her; yea, so we believe and so we teach, there is but one Catholick Church.*

Let the *Seclaries* and *Separatists*, that think to drown the cry of their sin with the noise of *Conscience*; Let them boast vainely of their Multitudes, that every one of their Congregations, though of different *Perfwasions*, is *the pure Church*; while they study to be many, and make Divisions, they are not the true *Spouse* and *Church* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Devil may have many *Synagogues*, but Christ hath but *one Church*, *one Wife*, *one Spouse*, *one Royal Priesthood*, *one holy People*, *one People* of his purchase. There is but *one Catholick Church*, *One* invariable from the beginning of the World, as to *Substantials*, and so will continue to the end of the same; and rather than there should be an appearance of *two*, Christ, our Peace, shed his Blood to make those that seemed twain both one, and hath
broken

broken down the middle wall of partition between us, Eph. 2. 14. One End, to be attained by the same Means. One People, to be governed by the same Laws. One Body, to be actuated by the same Spirit: Of that one Body, one Head, one Faith, one Baptism. One Eve, the Mother of all living Men: One Church, the Mother of all Believers.

No wonder St. Paul should so pathetically beseech the *Ephesians*, that if they would walk worthy of the Vocation whereunto they were called, that they should *hold the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.*

No wonder our Blessed Saviour, in his last Agony in the *Garden*, should pray so earnestly for those especially that had received the Laws which he had given them from the Father, *that they might be One as they were*, John 17. 23. That all that believe on him through his word, might be made perfect in one.

If we see rightly, we may behold Christ's *Heavenly Jerusalem*, that is incompassed with holy *Angels* as Walls, like a City that is compacted with the same Rules, as so many *ligaments*, and actuated with the same Spirit; accounts it not only good and joyful, but necessary for all the Members of the Society, to be joyned together in *Unity*.

It not only continues the welfare, but upholds the Constitution and being of the Church of Christ, to banish *Division*, and hold fast this *Unity*.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

There must be in the Catholick Church Unity of Faith.

THus the Church of Christ began in the last Dispensation, and so it is to be continued in *Unity: They were all, that were believers, with one accord in one place: The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul.*

As taught of God, so of Christ they were taught *to love one another, and to do unto others as they would be done by; like members of the same Body, mutually sympathizing, weeping with those that wept, and rejoicing with those that did rejoyce; bearing one anothers burthens, and thus fulfilling the mind of Christ.*

Neither had they of the Church of Christ a like respect to each others *persons*, but the same respect to the *Objects* that were presented before them. They did unanimously agree to *chuse* and *refuse*, to *love* and *bate* the same thing. They had a like *hope*, a like *fear*, the same *joy*, the same *sorrow*: Like Travellers, tending to the same End, they agree to walk in the same way, and had the same *will*, the same *mind*, the same *affections*.

As they of the Church of Christ are to agree in the desires and affections of the *appetitive* part, so ought they to agree in the conclusions and perswasions of the *intellective* part, that nobler part of the Rational Soul of man, if they will be knit into
that

that Society that will hold professed subjection to the Rules of the Gospel. The Society of *Believers* are to agree in the same *Faith*, the same *Judgment*, the same *Conscience*.

Thus St. Paul desires and expects of the believing *Corinthians*, that they should be perfectly joyned together, in the same *mind*, and in the same *judgment*; and of the *Ephesians*, that they should *endeavour to keep the Unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3. There being meant by *Spirit* as elsewhere, 1 *Thess.* 5. 23. the superiour faculty of the Rational Soul, the conclusions of which were to be kept one and the same: For but *one Body* and *one Spirit*, even as ye are called into *one hope of your calling. One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.* For Christ being ascended, and set at the Right hand of God in heavenly places, and having all things put under his feet, as Head of the Church, in it appointed several Orders, and to them gave several Gifts, for the *perfecting* of the Saints, for the *work* of the Ministry, for the *edifying* his Body, till every part might come in the *Unity of the Faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, &c.

Upon this Rock Christ hath promised to build his Church, meaning St. *Peters Faith*, not his *Person* or *Office*. As Christ hath but *one Church*, so that one Church is founded upon *one Rock*, and that unmovable, unchangable, alwaies the same. The Rain may descend, the floods may come down, and the winds may blow, and waves of opposition may split themselves with their own violence; but the *Faith* of Christs Servants stand unmovable, rather

rather confirmed than hurt: The Church of Christ is but *One*, built upon *one* Rock.

But the *Synagogues* of Satan are built upon heaps of *Sand*: Such is their Faith (if I may say they have any) as is like *heaps of Sand*, whose forms are changed upon every pressure, tossed up and down with every wind, ready to receive either augmentation or diminution upon external Contingencies. They are alwaies *Changable*.

But those that are truly Members of the Church of Christ, from an unalterable Rule, are of an *unchangable* Judgment: They are not like Children, tossed up and down with every breath, nor carried about with diverse and strange Doctrines; but the God of hope, as he hath filled them with all joy, so with all *peace* and *unity* in believing. That they continue stedfast in the same *Faith*, are perfectly joyned together in the same *Judgment*; and amidst Society of Believers, there is but *one Spirit*, *one Conscience*.

The Head and perfection of a Rational Creatures *Unity* must be in *Judgment*. Beasts may agree in *Affection*, only Men can agree in *Judgment*. And *Judgment*, *Faith* and *Conscience* (of which there is a noise in the World) are but little different; All the result of the Souls Reasoning, the deliberate conclusion and agreement of her Counsel from a certain Rule and infallible. A respect of the *Rational Creature* to the Rules of the Gospel, not only as true and warrantable, but as good and acceptable; and a serious purpose and resolution to conform to those Rules accordingly. Of which Rules some are *supernatural* and *revealed*, others
are

are *natural*; some *positive*, but being enjoined by Christ they are *eternal, universal, indispensable* and *binding* to the Catholick Church of Christ.

But some Rules are *particular*, given by Christian Rulers to their particular *National Churches*, to whose wisdom Christ hath left the ordering and enjoining of some *Canons*, not unlawful, for settling Peace. And be the *Canons* either concerning *Words* or *Actions*, since they are accomodately fitted to the custome and apprehensions of the People, and are significant expressions of the Subjects *Unity of Judgment and Faith*: They are *binding* to believing Subjects *for the Lords sake*.

So that as in the *Catholick Church*, for the *General Rules*, so in *particular Churches* for particular Commands, where lawfully fixed and unrepealed, the Believing Subjects are to be of the same *Faith*, of the same *Judgment*.

And where difference of *Faith* or *Judgments* are in the same constituted Church, impossible it is there should be *Unity of Affection*, impossible it is the Souldiers and Servants should be in *peace and Unity*, where Captains and Leaders are at *variance and dissension*.

Liberty, or pretence of *Conscience*, in a constituted Church, can never be plea sufficient to justify two differing *Believers* in differing and contrary undertakings. If one of those undertakings be warrantable, the others must be unlawful and unwarrantable. There is but *one Conscience, one Faith* in this case, can be justifiable, as certain as there is but *one Rule*, and but *one Truth*. And when two differing Believers, in differing and contrary Actions, can

can have but *one* true and justifiable Rule. There cannot be in contrary Actions any more than one right *Faith*, or justifiable *Conscience*.

And *Conscience* is *Concludens scientia*, a deliberate Conclusion, and settled Judgment, a fixed Determination of the Intellectual part from a certain *infallible Rule*, from which we infer, assume and apply to our selves the morality of our Actions, and determine of the subsequent issue accordingly. So that two things are required to make up a *Conscience* :

1. *A deliberate Determination or Conclusion.*
2. *A certain Rule from whence we infer the morality of our Actions.*

1. There must be a deliberate Determination in what may be called *Conscience*; so no Example or practice of the most retired, mortified man, can be a *Rule* for thy *Conscience*. The most devout of men are no Lords of our *Faith*, who at the best are but Helpers of our joy. *Infallibility* is not to be granted to any particular man, which is not granted to any particular Church of Christ. Neither can *Conscience* be made up soundly, from the practice of a *fallible man*, but from the law of Nature and Rules of an *Infallible God*. So that it is not to be called *Conscience* that is grounded on the Examples of godly Religious men, without thy own Deliberation.

Nor is that *Conscience* that hath only former *Resolutions* for its Rule: for wilful *obstinacy*, *timorousness* of purpose, cannot be a part of *Conscience*, which is not in the Appetitive part at all. Nor can *Humor*, *Animosity*, a sudden precipitate ingaging

be justified by plea of *Conscience*, when there must be *uneasiness*. *Conscience* cannot be without *Deliberation*; neither can *Deliberation*, without applying or determination, be called *Conscience*. For while the *Understanding* is fluctuating, questioning, and inquiring, it may be in tendency to it, it is not yet to be called *Conscience*.

And here again, they seem as far from Reason in their expressions, as from Obedience in their actions, that call out for liberty of *Conscience*, *May not my Conscience be free?* And they would make the doubting Reason against the undoubtedly lawful Command of the Superiour, in things *indifferent*, to be the weak, tender *Conscience*: But where *liberty* or *doubting* is, there can be no *determination* of the thing doubted, and where no determination there can be no *Conscience*.

2. That cannot be called *Conscience* that grounds not its Determination upon a certain *Rule*. When *Conscience* is but a Witness to a Rule, at the best a *subordinate Rule*; neither can it be an *absolute Law* which must be determined by a Law; without which it may be *Humor*, *Animosity*, *Fancy* or *Opinion*, whatever it is, surely it cannot rightly be called *Conscience*.

And since *Conscience* cannot be without a Rule, and when the Rules of *Nature* and the *Gospel* do not interfere, and are not contrary, there cannot be two different or contrary *Consciences* that can be both good, of any professed Believers in a constituted Church wheresoever.

Over the General Church of Christ there be Rules *Natural* and *Necessary*, whose *morality* is determined, and some Rules *Positive* and *Arbitrary*, that are eternally and universally binding to all *Believers* to the end of the World.

In all these Gospel Rules, there can be but *one Conscience* in all Believers undoubtedly.

And in every particular Church, somethings are to be determined for *Peace sake* by the wisdom of Governours, as *time* and *place*, *words* and *gestures*, &c. in the service and worship of God.

Now in a *Constituted Church* where these things are determined, I deliberately declare in this Subjects *submission*, and the others *refusal*, there can be but *one Conscience*. For when indifferent things are determined by wise and good Rulers, most conducing to *convenience* and *peace*, the Rule, upon such *determination*, is for every Believing Subject, to *submit to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake*.

Now when no *Conscience* can be without a Rule, since I have a Rule for my *Submission*, and thou canst shew no Rule thou hast for thy *Refusal*, certainly it must be concluded, I have a *Conscience* in my *willing subjection*, but thou canst have no *Conscience* in thy *wilful omission* and *opposition*. And being there is but *one Rule* that is good and warrantable in all *positive* things, there can be, to speak properly, in such things, but *one Conscience*.

For *Resolutions*, if without, yea much more if against a Rule, cannot be called *Conscience*. And

Conscience, which is *conscientia*, must have a double look, the first look it must cast on the *Rule*, the second it must cast on the *Actions*, be they either necessary or positive, or else it cannot be counted *Conscience*; and from thy agreeing or disagreeing with the *Rule*, so thy *Conscience* accuseth or excuseth accordingly.

And now I appeal to any sober mans Consideration, since there cannot be contrary *Rules* justifiable, whether there can be contrary *Consciences*. Certainly then, we may safely conclude in all *Constituted Churches*, since for Belivers actions there is but *one Truth*, but *one true Rule*; there must be for all such Believers but *one right Faith*, there can be but *one sound Conscience*.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

In such Constituted Societies, Unity of Faith must be signified by an open Uniformity.

G O D, who created man for his glory, designed him for Society, that what comfort he could not get by *separation*, he might compass by *Communion*. And Communion, in the state we are in, cannot be maintained but by *Externals*, by Bodily offices. As the Communion of the Invisible Church must be maintained by *Unity of Faith*, so the Communion of the Visible Church, or any part that is associated or united in obedience to the Faith, must be maintained by *agreement in the exercise of Religion*, and *Unity of Profession*.

And this Unity of Profession is properly called *Uniformity*, which is nothing else but a sensible form of an united Society agreeing in *one Profession*, both in words and actions.

So if any one should ask, *What is the sign or mark by which we may know a visible Church by, or any associated Company to be a part of it.* I must properly Answer, by *Uniformity*.

And *Uniformity*, as the word clearly speaks, is an *Unity* of the *outward form* of things, or an agreement of *visible practice*, and *joynt concurrence* in the Exercise of Religion, both in *words* and *actions*; which ought to be in every Congregation of Believers. Preaching of the Gospel, and re-

ceiving the Sacrament, of the *People* as well as of the *Minister*, being indispensable signs of every one that would be accounted of the Church of Christ.

And first, we will undertake to prove, that *Unity of Faith* must be signified by *Uniformity of words*; and this is not only lawful, but necessary and useful.

1. *Lawful*, as declared by the practice of all Nations that had a sense of Religion. For if *Heathen*, yet reasonably they agreed in the same Festivals and Solemnities, in the same Sacrifices and Gestures, in the same forms of Thanksgivings and Devotion; which, because written of by many, and confessed by all, it will be needless to cite Authors, or any further to insist upon the proof of it; no question but they Universally agreed in constituting and maintaining *Uniformity* amidst their Assemblies in all Religious observances.

If they were a People to whom God had more clearly manifested himself, and the true Religion, wherewith he would be well pleased, these marks they gave of their associating and uniting into a Church, by their *Universal joynt concurrence* in Religious Exercises, in all Ages, in their solemn Congregations.

And it is facile to prove, that among the *Jews* they judged the fittest Medium to preserve *Unity*, was *Ecclesiastical Uniformity* from their coming out of *Egypt*, till their dissolution in *Canaan*. And in some measure the *Jews* maintain this to this day, in their several Congregations.

They

They had their set Forms for *Aaronical* Benediction, for *hymns*, and *praises*, and *prayers* of the People, who agreed in one express assent to the *Covenant* and the *Law* delivered by *Moses*; in the same *Sabbaths* and *Festivals*, in the same *Sacraments* and *Ties of Obedience*.

They agreed in the same *Prayers* composed by *Jewish* Teachers for their *Disciples*. *St. John* the *Baptist* taught his *Disciples* to *pray*. And *Christ's* *Disciples* in the last dispensation, would be taught of him to *pray*, as *John* before had taught his *Disciples*. And our blessed Saviour not only taught his *Disciples* a *Form* but a *Prayer*, which they were to say. *When you pray, say*, *Luke* 11. 2. *Our Father, &c.*

To follow him can be no mistake. Certainly, deliberate Composites of *Set Forms*, from *Christ's* Example, receive not only *Toleration*, but sufficient *Approbation*.

And that the *Apostles* and their *Successors*, in *Primitive* times, used this *Prayer* in all their holy *Administrations*, especially at the *Sacraments* we have more than probable *Authority*.

And that the Church had *set Forms* after the first *Century*, is beyond all dispute. And that *Reformed* Churches have their *set Forms* now, generally, is openly manifest, except some *Phanatical Schismatics*, that out of a *Spirit of Contradiction*, and *precise singularity*, by the neglect of these things wilfully *Unchurch* themselves, and would blot out all appearance of a *Visible Church* upon the *Earth*.

Mr. *Calvin*, from the conviction of this Truth, *Epist. 87.* approves it, *That set Forms of Ecclesiastical Rights might be determined; that it might not be lawful for Ministers in their Administrations, or the People in their Attendances to vary from them.* And this he was forced to acknowledge from *Example, Practice and Reason.*

God, who cannot erre, prescribes *set Forms* to the *Jews*, and Christ to his Disciples. And it would be a misapprehension, yea a sin to think, that They would injoyn or command what might be an hinderance to *Godlineß*, or a disadvantage to the Exercise thereof.

And the concurrent Judgment and practice of all Churches, must convince any sober person of the lawfulness and expediency of *set Forms*, both in Prayers and Worship, which will be furthered by his own Reason, if he please to consider *Scripture* directions.

2. I shall prove *set Forms* lawful and expedient from Scripture.

St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 11. pathetically beseecheth the Church at *Corinth*, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that *they would all speak the very same thing.* *Verba sunt symbola mentis; è consensu verborum colligimus consensum animorum.* Words are but expressions of our Intentions, and from agreement in Words we conclude of agreement of Mind. And sure enough it was not required there by the Apostle, that the Speeches of the *Corinthians* in their Religious Assemblies, should be of the *same sense and meaning* only, but of the *same expression*; not only *contradiction* of words is prohibited, but

but *diversity*, if they would grant his suit, while he beseecheth them to speak the *same thing*.

And well might this be enjoined in Religious Exercises; for, *Ubi novæ phrasæ, ibi nova dogmata: A quibus Una fides, ab iis requiritur Una Confessio*. Where new *phrasæ* are used, there will be new *opinions*; And in whom there is expected but One Faith, from them there is required but One Confession, saith Mr. *Calvin*.

And, when idolizing of the *Gifts* and *Parts* of the Ministers, caused *Contentions* among the *Corinthians*, the Apostle might adjudge it necessary, that ostentation of *Eloquence* and *excellency of Speech* should be forboren among them, even in exercises of Devotion, and therefore earnestly beseecheth them to *speak the same thing*.

So, by St. *Pauls* direction, *Timothy* was to hold fast the *form of sound words*, at his Church at *Ephesus*; that as there is but *one Faith*, so in Believing Congregations there might be but *one Confession*.

And this not only evinced from *Scripture* and *Reason* as expedient, but from the Apostles practice, who having received the *promise* of the Father, and *power* from on high at *Jerusalem*, they agreed on *one summary Rule* for their own Teaching, and the Peoples believing, a compendious sum of *Evangelical Doctrines*, exquisitely composed, which is delivered to us by Tradition, from Antiquity, and generally received under the Name of the *Apostles Creed*.

In which *Confession*, the intelligent Believer not only makes an acknowledgment of his *assent* to *Promises of Mercy* to be rely'd upon, but to the reason-

reasonableness of *Duties of Obedience* that are enjoined by the Gospel to be practiced, and makes open profession of *Communion of Saints*, which must be maintained by the practice of *Holiness*, and comprehend all the duties of Christianity that are required.

And this compendious Confession of Faith by repeating this *set Form*, prescribed by the Apostles, hath been used by the *People* as well as the *Minister*, by which they openly declared their unfeigned *Assent* to what they did believe, and their stedfast *Resolution* of what they would do, in every Congregation that would be reputed of the Church of Christ.

And if it be lawful and expedient to have *set Forms* for Confession of Faith, it cannot be unlawful and unfitting to have *set Forms* for the exercise of Devotion. It cannot be a *reproach* but a *duty* to have our Spirits thus stinted, when the *Spirit of Grace* limits himself in the Rules of *Holiness*, and hath the denomination of *Holy* from this limitation.

And if new sorts of Words, and variety of Expressions must be used in *praying*, as some wildly fancy, I wonder *St. Paul* in all his Epistles, in the beginning should use the same Salutation, and in the end should use the same Valediction; and that Christ in his *Agony*, who wanted neither *expression* or *fervency*, should pray thrice together the same words.

At *Antioch*, that the Christians there in their Congregation, had their *Liturgy*. At *Corinth*, that the People were all *Propheying*. At *Jerusalem*, that in their
Religi-

Religious Assemblies, they were to *hold fast the profession of their Faith without wavering* ; is so evident, as doubtless it can need no further illustration.

And if *set Form* of Words were unlawful in Gods service, certainly the multitude of *Angels* would never have been represented unto us as agreeing in one *Anthem* on Earth, nor they above in the same *doxology* in Heaven.

And if the Examples of *Saints* and *Angels* may lead us rightly ; if *Nature*, *God* and *Christ*, and his *Apostles* may direct us safely, we must conclude, That *Uniformity of Words* is not only lawful but expedient in the exercise of *Godliness*.

3. I shall prove *Uniformity of Words* necessary and expedient by *Reason*.

1. And Reason it self will tell us (if we have not abjured it) that *Uniformity in Words* is necessary, and conducing to the practice of *Godliness* ; for take this away, and see what giddiness and distractedness must necessarily ensue in every Assembly.

Without agreement in these things, to terminate and bound both our *Thoughts* and *Words*, how improbable is it, that most men should be secured from inconsiderate wandrings, and unwarrantable expressions. But being confined to words of *Faith* and *Devotion*, we call home our *Thoughts* to consider what these import and signifie, that are enjoined and prescribed us, and reverently we worship God, and pray to him, and confess to his Name.

And our wilful Opposers give Testimony to this Truth by their practice, that *set Forms* must be prescribed to the People.

When

When the best gifted Brother is appointed and agreed on to put up *Prayers*, which are *set Forms* to the whole Congregation; and it is not to be denied, but every Member that is truly *Religious*, secretly doth concur with such *Prayers*, and limit their *Thoughts* to what is signified by such *Expressions*. Weak Creatures! never considering that they split upon that Rock which they pretend studiously to avoid, while they voluntarily enslave themselves, and stint their *spirits* and *thoughts* to conform to the sudden wild effusions, and oft unwarrantable expressions of their idolized Teacher; and dare not spoil their Liberty, to submit unto, and concur with the deliberate *Forms* and *Prescriptions* of their sober Governours and Rulers, which will undoubtedly guide and lead them to the right exercise of *true Religion* that tends to peace.

Poor inconsiderate People, they know not what to do; for it is not a *set Form* they hate, which they may see they cannot avoid, but a *spirit of Contradiction* they love, while they oppose the warrantable directions of their Religious Leaders, and willingly suffer themselves to be captivated by wild ungovern'd *Enthusiasts*, and run headlong into an inexcusable sin of a wilful Disobedience.

But if any can think *set Forms* to be unlawful, and will be tied to none, but avoid them, then must every pretended Saint bring a distinct *Prayer* and *Psalms*, to be poured out by himself in their several Congregations. And it must necessarily follow, when every one is singing a several *Psalms* in their

their Congregation, it must happen what *St. Paul* saith was at *Corinth*, when they all spake with several *Tongues*, a Stranger coming in must in reason conclude, that there was *madness* in the midst of them.

Thus in *Reason* we must determine, to terminate and bound the *Thoughts* and *Considerations* of them that would be truly Religious, there ought to be *set Forms of Words* agreed upon and prescribed in Believing Congregations.

2. That is best to be used that will most heighten our *Devotion* and *Intention* in our Religious addresses to God; for how shall I hope that God should intend me, if I do not intend my own *Petitions*. And I am verily perswaded, *Prayer* without *Devotion*, is like a *Body* without a *Soul*, it is dead and ineffectual.

Now this I do deliberately affirm and maintain, *That premeditated and set Forms of Prayer must heighten any mans Devotion and Intention.*

I desire such as obstinately oppose *premeditated* and *composed Forms*, to consider, that in this they contend only for *freedom of Words*.

And have *Words* any power or influence over God? Can we imagine, that God is taken with *variety* or *shift* of *Phrases*? *Words* or *locutions* are for mans necessity, not Gods information. They are of no necessity to make our hearts known to him, who understand what we need before we ask him, and our *Thoughts* afar off. And it is the *affections* of our Hearts, not the *expression* of our Mouths, that make us prevail with our God.

What

What therefore may best conduce to settle our *Consideration*, to fix our *Desires* and *Intentions* on God, and good things, is most lawful and most expedient to be used. And this, I dare say, upon Reason and from Experience, is best done by well-weighed Forms of *set Prayers*, foreknown and assented unto both by Priest and People.

For the operation of one Faculty hinders the operation of another; the employment of the *Understanding* and *Invention* must hinder the intention of the *Will* and *Devotion*. Sure we must acknowledge the busying of the *Invention* in him that speaketh, and his *Consideration* in him that heareth, whether things be warrantable or acceptable that is spoken, or not, must hinder the Intention of either.

And since *Intention* is more prayer, and more likely to prevail with God than *Elocution*, I may possibly busie my head and strain my *Invention*, when I go about to please men, and if possible, quicken my *Elocution* in preaching. But I will settle my heart, and fix my *Intention*, when I go about to intreat or speak to my God.

In Reason therefore, I must conclude, and from Experience avouch it, That *Devotions* united in same *Expression*, like Waters streightned in one Channel, run the most irresistably; yea, undoubtedly, premeditated and fore-known *Expressions* heighten *Intention* and *Devotion*, and make the *Prayers* of any Congregation the more acceptable, and the more prevalent with God.

The Objection is frivolous and weak, which our dissenting Adversaries make against those *Repetitions* used in our *Common Prayer*, as if they did remit and bedead our Affections; when, if rightly considered and applyed, they *intend*, *liven* and *invigorate* them.

Our Saviour at the *last Agony* in the *Garden*, three times retired himself, and *prayed thrice the same words*, Mat. 26. 44. Sure none dare say he wanted ability to alter his Expression, or that he wanted *affection*, though he did not. No sure, we may safely conclude to this Point, That, *as Christ, so the Christian hath his Devotion helped and not hindered, by a set and foreknown expression.*

3. The weakness of the People is to be considered; and I appeal to any sober man to judge, It being to be granted, that the generality of the People are dull of *Apprehension*, of *slow Judgment*, prone to *inconsiderateness*, and *inadvertency*; whether *set Forms*, seriously fore-weighed, and prudently digested and prescribed, are not more probable Helps of *Devotion*, and better preparations for the Peoples general *Concurrence*, who have neither quick *Apprehensions* nor discerning *Judgments*, than *extempore*, *indigested*, and *voluntary effusions*.

4. The manifold *necessities* we are involved in, and *wants* we are streightned with, and the infinite number of *Mercies* wherewith we are blessed, and have received, cannot in an instant be called to remembrance, and duly be considered.

So

So it is not to be supposed, that our *Petitions* or *Thanksgivings* can be fully or comprehensively expressed upon *extempore effusion*, but only upon serious and deliberate *premeditation*.

Lastly, It would be good to leave to future times and to other Churches, for their Example, our settled *Agreement* and *Consent*, unanimously concurring in the *soundness* and *incorruptness* of our Religion, which we cannot evidence, without we agree in constant *Uniformity*, in *Words* and *set Forms*, fore-known and agreed unto by *Priest* and *People*. But I forbear.

If we will follow the practices of all Nations that pretended to Religion, *true* or *false*. If we will be guided by the Rules and Directions of the *Gospel*. If we will follow the dictates of discursive *Reason*; we must conclude it *lawful*, *necessary*, and *expedient*, and conducing to the practice of *true Piety*, That *Unity of Faith* should be signified by *Uniformity of Expression*, in all Believing Congregations.

And as *Unity of Faith* was to be signified by agreement in the same Words, so by *Uniformity* in alike Gestures and Actions, in all the Congregations that were parts of the *Catholick Church* of Christ. From those *Prophecies* that fore-tell what there would be, we may conclude what there should and ought to be expected in the Church of the living God.

Christ fore-told his *Spouse* in her Militant state, *Cant. 6. 9, 10.* should be *an Army under Banners*, *sub vexillo Crucis*, whatever distraction of an Army, when secure, yet when terrible under Banners, they

They all agree in the same posture, *offensive* or *defensive*. In the same guard, the same march and motion.

And no less is intimated, *Cant. 1. 9.* when the *Church* is compared to a *company of Horses in Pharaohs Chariots*; for this resemblance was not only to intimate of believing Parties, equally joyned together in the same design, that like *Pharaohs Horses* there was quickness in expedition, but also that there was *Uniformity* in that motion. Not that one stood up, and another ly'd down; not that one drew forward and another backward; that one pulled this way, another that way. But when one stood they all stood, when one ran they all ran; all went the same way, all the same pace, all used the same motion. And thus the *Saints of Believing Congregations* might be said to be *like a company of Horses in Pharaohs Chariots*.

And that inlightned Divine, that *saw a door opened into Heaven, and a Throne fixed, and one sitting upon the Throne, and Elders and Angells, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, worshipping him that sate upon the Throne,* represents them to us in their glorious state, as all unanimously agreeing, to fall down, and cast their *Crowns before him that liveth for ever and ever, and all saying, Blessing, honour, glory and power, &c.* All recorded, without question, to inform us what ought to be our behaviour on Earth, if we would be like them in Heaven, namely, alway to be busied in a joynt concurrence of acknowledging and worshipping God, as with the *same words, so with the same actions*.

H

And

And if any would yet further desire to see this *Uniformity* more expressely urged, by the Apostle, upon particular Churches in the Primitive times, let them observe *St. Paul's* direction to the Church at *Corinth*. To them he could not write unto as *spiritual*, but as *carnal*, and the reason was, because there were *strifes* and *divisions*, and that when they came together in the Church of God, they *eat*, and acted distractedly, and shew'd they were bent more to gratifie the humour of a Party, rather than to preserve the *Unity* of a Society by a well-ordered decency. Shall the Apostle praise them in this? No, such *meetings were for the worse, and not the better*. They were to maintain no such custome in the Church of Christ, in *that* there were to be no *Divisions*, but all things were to be done *decently and in order*.

So to the *Ephesians*, If they would *walk worthy of the Vocation whereunto they were called*, they were to hold the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*. True indeed, *Unity of spirit* is internal, but *Peace* and its *bond*, their *endeavour* and *walking*, were all external; and it is no more than this, That they would endeavour to hold the *Spirits Unity* by their obliged *Uniformity*.

So *Heb. 10.* After the Divine Author had set out the glorious Priviledges they might expect from *Christ*, he proceeds to direct them a joynt *profession of Faith*, to a demonstration of *love*, to a provocation to *good works*, to mutual exhortations to *Publick meeting*.

And as he to them, so to all the rest of the Churches doth *St. Paul* injoyn, that they should *adorn*

adorn their Profession; that their Conversation should be becoming the Gospel; that they should behave themselves orderly as in the House of God.

And now certainly, it may be concluded both from *Scripture* and *Reason*, from the practice of *Saints* in the Church Militant, or Triumphant; That as *internal Unity of spirit* is to be indeavoured after to present us blameless to God, so should *external Uniformity in words and actions*, be endeavoured to be preserved in all believing Congregations.

And now I have plainly and perspicuously discoursed of every Section contained in this Chapter, and I think convincingly to any sober Reason. I may justly complain, that there be too few will believe our Report. *Infelix infirmitas, ad se vocat medicus ut litibus occupatur egrotus.*

Peace and Unity is praised of many, but very few endeavour to preserve it; And, *Wo is me that I am constrained to dwell in Mesech, and have my habitation among the Tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with them that are enemies to Peace.*

And now I speak for peace, I look that some are ready to prepare themselves for battle. I look that that which is the lot of many good Physicians, should be mine at this time, that although my design (God knows) is not to torture my sick Country-men, but to heal them; that some like frantick Patients should run from me, and that others now but touched should cry out of me.

Many, either insensible of their sickness, or else in love with their distemper, are not only careless but backward to be cured. I see and bewail it, that many men are miserably wounded with,

and yet I justly lament it, that I find a great unwillingness in most of them to be Healed.

For *Unity of Faith*, How many men either out of *weakness*, or *partiality*, or *prejudice*, or *interest*, or *acquaintance*, have espoused rashly a wilful Opinion, and set it up and idolize it. And this fancy, *Opinion*, perhaps *Perswasion*, they shall cry up and publish it abroad for *Conscience*, *Judgment*, *Faith*. For which, God knows, if examined, they have not the least shadow of a Rule, or appearance of Reason. So I may complain with St. Hilary, *ad Constant. Aug. Facta est fides, fides temporum potius quam Evangeliorum periculosum; & miserabile, tot nunc fides existere, quot voluntates. Excidêrunt ab eâ fide quæ sola est; & dum multe fiunt, ad id ceperunt esse ne ulla sit.*

I lament that, too apparently to be seen in our daies, what the Holy Father complains was to be found in his, *viz. That the Faith among us is the Faith of the Times rather than the Faith of the Gospel. It is very dangerous and miserable, that there should be among us as many Faiths as Wills, and as many Consciences as obstinate Resolutions.*

They have departed from that Faith which is *One*, and while they pretend to have many Faiths, they cease to keep any. And if it be rightly considered, what *Faith* or *Conscience* is, there is scarce any true knowledge, or practice, of either to be found in too great a part of our Generation.

I hear the words frequently among us, but I must publish it, that I do not understand them: *May I not have liberty of Conscience? May I not differ in Judgment from other men, and yet agree*

in Affection? May we not go *several waies*, and yet meet together at the end of our Journey?

Were ever any such things reasonably vented in a Constituted Church? Have not the men lost both *Reason* and *Religion* that dare confidently publish these things? Can there be such a thing as *Liberty of Conscience*? Are they not absolutely inconsistent? Consider, and it must be acknowledged, If thou hast *Conscience* of any thing thou hast no *Liberty*; if thou hast *Liberty* there can be no *Conscience*.

May not men differ in *Judgment* and yet agree in *Affection*? What, *ad idem*, in respect to the same thing? certainly, No; it is impossible. If I judge a thing *lawful* and thou judgest the same thing *unlawful*, our *Affections* must differ as much as *love* and *hate*, and certainly these are contrary *Affections*.

Can we not go *several waies*, and yet meet at the end of our Journey? certainly, No. The end of our Journey we both tend to is agreed on to be *Heaven*, *Happiness*. Now if *Vertue* be the right way to *Happiness*, and that lies in a strait line, as *Morality* teaches us, sure there can be no declining this Line but there must be *obliquity*. If the Way to *Heaven* be *narrow* and *streight on*, as *Divinity* teaches us, thou canst not go besides this Way but thou wilt at last fall headlong into the Ditch. We must both of us keep the same way, or else one of us must be in the *broad way that leads to destruction*.

And for *Unity of Affection*, where can we find that in a Family, much less in a Parish or Congregation?

gation? If ever the Complaint was true it is now in our daies, that *Fratrum concordia rara est*. We are all pretending to travel with the same design from *Egypt* to our Father in *Canaan*, and we are Brethren, but how few of us look to the Charge given us? How few are they that take heed that they do not fall out in the way.

There be two Graces that Christ commends to us as the way to the kingdom of Heaven, *Humility* and *Charity*, but instead of these we see the contrary, *Pride* and *Contention*. All pretended Members of Christs body, yet no sympathy, no bearing one anothers burthen. We are ready to laugh at each others infirmity, and to rejoyce at each others misery. Our iniquity aboundeth, and love waxeth cold. Our distinguishing Garment is rent clean in pieces, which should be our *Charity*, and that is the bond of perfectness. This mans hope is that mans fear. One mans joy is another mans sorrow.

And as we can hardly find *Unity in Judgment*, or *Affections*, so rare it is to see *Uniformity in Words* or *Actions*. For words instead of agreement, what difference, what opposition? And for those that separate from the Communion of the visible Church of *England*, where can we find that Congregation that agrees to speak the same thing.

We dwell among People of a strange Language. The *Trumpets* have given, from most Pulpits, an uncertain sound, and how can the Soldiers agree to prepare themselves to the Battle.

We

We may observe, many of our Priests have been lingring to offer *strange Fires*, such wild expressions and inconsiderate excursions, as instead of helping have diverted our Devotions and distracted our Affections.

And for *Actions* instead of *decency* and *order*, what distraction, yea, what confusion in all our separated Congregations. By appearance one would judge them of *Babel* rather than of *Jerusalem*. Such distractions, as if every one had a peculiar God by himself; or rather, such universal *profaneness* or *irreverence*, as if no God were thought of as present throughout their whole Congregations. Our Neighbours and Acquaintance stand aloof off from that *Uniform* worship of God that is prescribed and enjoined, and no wonder if Strangers think and report, that some dreadful Disease cleaves fast unto us.

I heartily lament many *Crying sins* that are generally spreading over the body of this poor Nation, and yet, upon sober Consideration, I cannot judge any sin so manifestly destructive to the health and beauty of the believing Society, and Church of *England*, as is this of *Schisme* and *Separation*.

There is no one sin that tyrannizeth more over us, but we may say to *Schism*, as the Pirate did once say to *Alexander*, *Thou blamest and condemnest me for preying on single Persons, and accountest thyself without fault, while thou destroyest a whole Nation*.

These things have I written and spoken to my dissenting Country-men, not in wrath and bitter-

ness to shame and torment them, but with grief and compassion to warn and amend them, that we may all agree to banish those *Schisms* and *Divisions* in the Service of God, which are this day our shame, and that we may endeavour to bring back that *Unity* in Gods worship, which was once the glory and joy of this poor Church and Nation.

My endeavour, as well as my Prayers, shall alwaies be, *that we agree to hold the Unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace.* For *Zions* sake I cannot hold my peace, nor for *Hierusalems* sake be quiet, till I have manifested my study and endeavour to bring all the baptized Subjects of this Church and Kingdom, to signifie the *Unity of their Faith by an open Uniformity.*

CHAP.



C H A P. VI.

The Canons and Forms established and prescribed by our Governours, to direct and promote the General Uniformity of English Professours, are most agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel, and are the best and most convenient that are visibly extant to us in the World.

Section,

- I. *There must be Forms or Canons prescribed, by Rulers, to carry on Uniformity.*
- II. *The Canons and Forms already established to this end, in England, are agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel.*
- III. *These Canons and Forms are visibly the best, extant to us, upon sober Consideration.*

S E C T. I.

*There must be Forms or Canons prescribed by Rules,
to carry on Uniformity.*

GOD, who by his wise Providence governs all the works of his hands, rules them all by a *Law*. And Governours subordinate, as appointed and sent by him, are to govern Rational men, joyned in Society under them, by a *Law* also.

As God in the World, so Christ in his Church, complying with the *Necessities* and *Infirmities* of his Subjects, hath given *Rules* to direct them in *Faith*, *Devotion* and *Conversation*, by that New Law, which is the *Gospel*, by which superintendent Frame of Government, his subordinate Governours are to govern his *Church* to the end of the World.

And so according to that *New Law*, Christs Deputies are to establish *Laws of Piety* and *Laws of Honesty*.

We are now in this part of our Treatise to speak of those *Laws* that respect *Piety*; and according to the two parts whereof Man consists, some *Injunctions of Piety* must concern our Souls, and some our Bodies.

The *Injunctions* of Governours that direct to purity of hearts and spirits, may be called *Counsels*, *Monitions*. They cannot properly be called the

the Laws of *Governours*, but Laws of *Christ*; for they cannot oblige the *Souls* of the Subjects either by *rewards* or *punishments*, having no cognizance when they obey, or when they rebel, when they heartily like or dislike such Injunctions. *Christ* can only reward these according to their hidden works.

But *Rules* of sensible things, for ordering mens *words* or *actions*, those are properly called the Laws of *Governours*; for of these they can make discovery. The *observance* or *omission* of these things are discernable by Rulers, and according to the Merits of their Subjects so they can recompence them.

And let no sober Person think, that *Laws* about external demeanour, or decent behaviour of our Bodies in our Religious attendances, are such trifles, toyes, needless Circumstances, childish, insignificant Ceremonies, as many irrationally and inconsiderately defame them, when they are natural and necessary for our *Communion* in our present condition; when true *Grace* operates, the light within us *directs*, and the Holy Spirit *delights* in these things, being willing to admit of our *Bodies* to be his Temple; when these *Vessels* are to be possessed in *sanctification* and *honour*. And God hath called us not to *uncleanness*, but *holiness* of these things.

When *Christ*, by his *Gospel*, hath ordered the hearing and preaching of his *Word*, the administration and receiving the *Sacraments*, the regarding our *Conversations* and *Words*, by which we are either justified or condemned. And these things are sensible and external. And

And certainly, an imputation of *Rashness* and *Uncharitableness* cannot be deserved by us, if from such open and wilful opposition and slighting of *Externals*, as unnecessary and inexpedient, we should judge these men as wilfully bent to overthrow Humane Government, when they would destroy that in a moment, about which alone Government can be busied and employed.

It must then be granted, That the publick exercise of *Universal Piety*, ought to be the Governours first care, and that their first *Laws* ought to be about injoyning *Uniformity* to their Subjects.

Now by *Uniformity*, as it hath been set forth in the preceding Chapter, is meant an *Unity* or joynt assent and concurrence of Professors both in *Words* and *Actions*, *Confessions* and *Gestures*, fitly expressing and signifying a Religious respect and reverence to that Supream Majesty we meet to adore.

A service so useful and necessary, that all Governours by their *Laws* have injoyned it; and all Nations by their practice have attested it in all Religious Meetings through all Generations.

1. Because G O D, who is not a God of *Confusion* but of *Order*, a God not of *Division* but of *Unity*, is best pleased and most glorified when no man draws back, but when without distraction there is an Universal discovery of every mans evident respect to him. *When the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.*

2. Thus Neighbours are most edified. Consent and agreement of others with us, give a pleasure and

and content to us. It gives a confirmation to our *Judgment* and *practice* when we receive approbation and allowance from the practice of others.

3. Thus *Infidels* are most likely to be wrought upon and converted. One mans preaching may make a man consider, but certainly it cannot have so great an influence as the *Uniformity* of a whole believing Congregation. We are ready to think those things not hurtful but beneficial, which we see *universally* practised; and we are easily drawn to the practice of those things which we see generally allowed and used by others.

So that, if a man be converted or unconverted, *joynt Concurrence* in Common Service, and the *Uniform* Worship of God, is more to be valued than any one mans Preaching, being of a greater influence and of a stronger operation.

Since therefore we speak of a visible Church, be it *Catholick*, *National*, or *Parochial*, it is *Cætus evocatorum*, a Company of Men called; not *invisibly*, *internally*, but *externally*, *sensibly*, and such as have manifested their compliance with that Call. Not a Company but a Society of Believers joyned together by a mutual profession of Faith.

For as *Unity* of a sincere Faith is necessary for the Constitution of the Church *invisible*, so is *Unity* of profession of Faith necessary for the Constitution and being of a *visible* Church. And to avoid rash unanswerable *expressions*, and unbecoming *behaviour*, it is both reasonable and necessary that *words* and *actions* should be reasonably agreed upon and determined.

The

The *thoughts* of our Souls, like the *eyes* of our Bodies, without an Object to terminate them, will wander to the ends of the Earth; therefore the prime work of *Piety* and *Religion*, in the Rational Soul, is to set God before the eyes of its Understanding. That, upon serious consideration, seeing and concluding him the *Best* and the *Greatest*, man may rationally both think and speak most honourably of him, and behave himself most reverently towards him.

For *Uniformity* then in Religious exercises, of necessity there must be the same Object; GOD, who is infinite, must be proposed. That our *considerations* and *respects* may be terminated upon him. And of necessity there must be *Rules* and *Forms* agreed upon and fixed, to direct and limit all associated Professors, that their *considerations* and *respects* may be united either in knowing God or worshipping him.

Circumstances cannot be left indefinite and undetermined; for mans *Thoughts* are as diverse, naturally, as their Faces and Tempers. Their *Words* and *Actions* usually wild and extravagant, and not only different but contrary also; unless all these be bounded and terminated, what *Unity* can there be? An arbitrary Will-worship will follow, according to every mans fancy; and in every meeting instead of a well-ordered Unity, there must necessarily happen *distraction* and *confusion*.

And these things are obvious to every man that rationally considers them; for never any Nation that had *Religion* true or false, but alwaies agreed on a Common Ministration. And in all their
Sacri-

Sacrifices, either *propitiatory* or *gratulatory*, they have united together by certain *Rules* in a common Service, and a joynt concurrence in it, to that Deity which they adored.

And certainly, all those Reasons formerly alledged to urge an open *profession of Faith*, return with new vigour, strictly to oblige every Visible Church, to acknowledge the necessity of fixing and observing *Rules of Uniformity* in every respective Congregation. That the infinite Majesty of G O D may be generally and worthily glorified: That our *Neighbours* and our selves, may be most probably edified and comforted: That those that are *Unbelievers* may have their Conversion best furthered; there must be *Canons* and *Forms* prescribed by Rulers to carry on a general Uniformity.

To conclude this Section then, Governours must Rule by a *Law*; their Laws can reach only to *Externals* in the exercise of Godliness. In which *Exercise* of Godliness, the first aim of Governours by their Laws, is to promote *Uniformity* in Religious Assemblies. To settle and continue an *Uniformity* there must be *Rules* to limit and direct.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

That the Canons and Forms in our Liturgy, prescribed to the ends above-mentioned, are most agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel, is the next considerable.

LITURGY in its etymologie, if rightly understood, gives its full import and signification. It is a *Form* or *Rule* of Administration in some publick Office.

Sometimes it is put in Scripture for Ministration in offices of *Humanity* and *Liberality*. But our discourse and common Acceptation leads us, to take it for that kind of *Ministration* that relates to *Holy things* about the Service and worship of God. So here we understand it to be, *the Canons and Forms prescribed in a Visible Church, of external profession of Faith, by an evident demonstration of Obedience.* For, *λεῖπον ἕρπον λαῖ ἰτὸν*, *quod sit per populum, & sit publicum*, a publick, Religious Ministration in a Congregation of Believers. So the People must be understood concerned in the *Ministration* as well as the Priest. And those of the People that would be accounted of the Visible Church, are to submit and conform to such *Canons and Forms* as are prescribed in the Ministration.

And when a Church is not an Assembly only, but a Society of the *Faithful*; not internally Faithful

ful only (for that is not discernible by us) but *externally* by publick Profession, either by *words* or *actions*.

What our Judgments must be of them, that in Assemblies neglect and despise *Profession*, according to Rules prescribed, is easily to be concluded: For whatever good opinion others blindly may have of such, or they may have of themselves, yet, not giving in their Assemblies any evident signs of *external Profession*, they are in reason not to be judged of the Visible Church of Christ.

And this shews, how unjustifiable the *Meetings* of our Separatists are, when there is no *publick exercise of Religion*, no *vocal confession of Faith*, no *express desires of Obedience*, in any of their Congregations.

To give evidence of any Assembly, that it is a part of the Visible Church, there must be a sensible *Profession*, an apparent submission to the *Canons* and *Forms* of a Liturgy. And conformity of the People to those *Rules*, gives satisfaction who are to be reputed; but wilful omission and neglect declares who are not to be reputed of the *Church* of Christ. And blessed be God, we have, as it is necessary and expedient, from our wise Governours, considering our infirmities and extravagancies, *Canons* and *Forms* prescribed in our Liturgy for Religious Ministration, which are most agreeable to the *Rules* of the *Gospel*.

The *Rules* of the *Gospel*, given by Christ and his Apostles, are of so different natures, such different sorts: The *Canons* and *Forms* ordering our Common-Service, in the publick exercise of Religion,

gion, are so numerous and various, as it were the work of an Age to discourse distinctly and pertinently of every particular, that may be comprehended in this Section. But first let us consider what we understand by the *Rules* of the Gospel, to which our *Canons* and *Prayers* are to conform.

Now our Blessed Saviour, at the first planting of the *Gospel* (upon the Apostles and Seventy, before his Passion, and upon some Chosen Vessels for his Honour, after his Ascension having all power given him) did in those daies plentifully pour out his *Spirit* upon them, and *gifts, graces* and *ability* he gave to them in an extraordinary manner and measure, for the work of the Ministry and edifying his Body, by the prevalence of his *Word* and *Gospel*, which he sent them abroad to preach, confirming the Word by signs following.

That the whole power of the World was not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which they spake, divers Gifts he distributed of miraculous operation. For different Administrations; as *Gifts of Healing, working of Miracles, Propheying, discerning of Spirits, diverse kinds of Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues*. All these in an instant wrought that one and self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he pleased.

And several *Rules* he gave them, that trusting to the supply of the Almighty in all their exigence, upon this Heavenly design, they should *provide neither Gold nor Silver, nor Scrip, nor Coat, nor Shooes, nor Staves*. No care what to speak, *dabitur in illâ hora*; whatever they needed, the Heavenly Father
that

that called them to the work, would supply them in all those things.

But these Rules were *extraordinary*, and so were the *Assistances* needful only for those Persons, in those daies of *Persecution* when they were *bated of all men for his Names sake*, and were to trust only to a support and a supply from the *All-sufficiency* of the Almighty.

But, blessed be God, we are not now incompassed with these *streights*, God hath provided better things for us. That although the malice of some men would bring us to walk according to these *Rules*, and support our selves with the expectation of such *Assistances*, and those mistakes have caused no little disturbance in the Church of Christ; yet, now the *Gospel* hath found a free passage and reception, we have an happier juncture of Affairs.

We need not expect *Miracles* for our support, when we have *Means* in peace afforded us to carry on the design of God. God is, and we may well be contented with more reasonable Services. And it is unreasonable to think, having none of the same necessity upon us, and to conclude, that in *these* daies the same *Gifts* and *Assistances* should be continued among us; is a dangerous and an unsufferable presumption.

These extraordinary *Rules* and *Assistances* were given to those particular Persons, during those particular Times; but they are now unpracticable, and not according to the mind of Christ. And there were some *Rules* given to certain Churches, and some particular places, but these are not our

Canons or *Forms* to be modelled by. The *Rules* then of the Gospel we are to look after, are not particular but universal, not temporary but eternal, binding for ever to the whole Church of Christ.

Now, the *Laws* of the Gospel given by Christ, or his Apostles, are of two sorts; some respect internally, the regulating *Intentions*, *Thoughts* and *Desires*, for private Persons, singular peace: And some respect externally, ordering the *Conversation* of the Visible Church of Christ. To the *Rules* of this latter sort we must have regard unto, in this present discourse.

And these *Rules* are of two sorts; either natural, necessary, eternal and indispensable, and would have been binding if Christ had not revived them; As, that we praise God, fall down and worship him; that we keep our Tongues from evil, and our Lips that they speak no guile; that we keep our Bodies from all filthiness; that whatever we would that others should do to us, the same, &c.

But some *Laws* are positive and voluntary, receiving their being and constitution from Christ, whose goodness, wisdom and Authority, we are not to suspect, but that he will direct those things to his Church that are best and most convenient, and such *Directions*, by his Subjects, are carefully to be observed; As, that they should pray in these words; receive the Sacraments with those signs and manner of Communication required.

All these positive *Laws* of Christ are universal, indispensable, and though the positive *Laws* of Men are particular and mutable upon inconvenience,

ence, yet these *positive Laws* of Christ are constituted, and come from such unquestionable Wisdom, as they must be accounted *universally* and *eternally* binding to his Church, to all Generations.

The *Laws* then of Christ, be they either those *natural Laws* that he revived, or the *positive Laws* that he constituted, that he hath *ordinarily, universally, eternally*, left his Church to be ruled by to the end of the World, are the Laws we would have our *Canons*, for Uniformity, to be tryed by.

And because our Blessed Saviour knew very well, that an *Anarchy* was unnatural, and not to be endured, he wisely directs these Laws to two sorts of People that will be in his Church to the end of the World.

First, To Rulers, Leaders and Superiours.

Secondly, To Inferiours, Subjects and the Generality of the People under Authority.

1. For *Rulers*, They be of two sorts; some *Civil*, which we call *Magistrates*: Others *Ecclesiastical*, which we call *Ministers*.

What concerns *Magistrates* we treated of formerly.

For *Ministers* we have several Orders, and distinctions, allowed by the Gospel. The *Laws* for them are obvious, in the discharge of their several Offices.

Inferiour Ministers most concern us in the Exercise of Religion. These, if any, we should in this discourse respect. And certainly, that Obedience which these Ministers shew in their usages, as

directed in their *Rites, Ceremonies, Habits, Gestures, observing daies, &c.* are lawful and easily justifiable.

And these things are made so clear by the pens of sober, Learned and Judicious men, to any that will not be wilfully blind, all the Objections so fully answered, as it would be tedious and impertinent for me to insist in a further Vindication.

It were more reasonable and Christianlike if men would look more diligently to the discharge of their own duties, and be less ready to censure and condemn other mens Just observances. If any thing were questionable in them, *viderint ipsi*, they must answer it to their proper Judge, who made thee one?

Be not curiously inquisitive what others do, or should do, *Tolle quod tuum est*, do thy own business, and seriously consider what thou art bound to do thy self, that thou maist inherit *eternal life*. And this I am sure thou art obliged to do; to give thy *Decent attendance*, and joyntly to concur in the *Publick exercise of Holiness*, and the worship of God, as it is ordered in the *Book of Common-Prayer*.

And now our discourse begins to be brought into a narrow compass. This is all that remains for us to prove in this Section, That the *Canons* and *Forms* prescribed to the Common sort of our Believers, in our *Book of Common-Prayer*, are agreeable to the universal, eternal, and indispensable *Rules of the Gospel*.

Canons

Canons for Uniformity, in our Religious meetings and Assemblies which we are not to forsake, respect either *Words* or *Actions*, let us take a quick survey of either, and see if both be not allowed and prescribed by the *Gospel*.

After a Company is Religiously met and assembled together, all admit and approve of a *Pastour* or *Teacher*, an Exhorter, a Leader to holy Services, unless they have lost their Reason and Religion also.

After their Assembling, the Minister, by *Scripture Exhortations*, prepares the People for their joynt concurrence in the solemn Worship of God.

After Preparation, the whole Congregation is ordered and directed to joyn in an *open Confession*, of *Gods* Excellency and All-sufficiency, of their *own* Sins, of *Christs* Merits, in whose Name they ask *forgiveness*, and of their desire of a *full Obedience*, that they may live a godly, righteous and sober life.

After this, upon good grounds, is denounced *Absolution of sins*, upon the intimation of their unanimous desires to leave and forsake them.

Then all the People joyn in the *Lords Prayer*, Confession of Praise and Thanks to the glory of the *Trinity*, into whose Name they were all Baptized.

Then they proceed to *Hymns* and *Psalms*, to mutual Exhortations, and stirring up each in other holy Affections.

Then follows *vocal Confession of Faith*; a *Litany* they all joyn in, deprecating all *evil*, praying for all *good*, for themselves and all men.

Then they proceed to give intimation of their mutual desires and resolutions, of a full obedience and respect to all Gods *Commandments*.

And as in *Service* so in *Sacraments*, the People give a clear acknowledgment of their adhering to the true and undefiled *Religion*, to which they have engaged themselves. Of their consideration and estimation of *God*; of their meet and suitable *Affections*.

And if the People be silent for a while, while the Priest is offering up a sacrifice of *Prayer* and *Praise* in Christs Name, on the behalf of the Congregation; yet, that every man may testify his intention, and consideration, and particular assent, when universally, as directed and ordered, they speak *Amen*, which is then best done when most heartily exprest, that our *Amen* in our meetings might be like thunder, and our *Hallelujahs* like the noise of many waters.

For *Actions*, they are not many enjoined to the People; As, their meeting at convenient *time* and *place*. Their *kneeling* and *prostration* upon acknowledgment of Gods Excellencies, and begging Mercy. Their *standing* at any Exultation or rejoicing at a sense of Mercy promised or exhibited. Receiving the *Sacrament* with significant intimations of becoming *Considerations* and *Affections*.

These *Canons* and *Forms* prescribed for the Peoples *Uniformity*, which are in our *Liturgies*, are allowed and justified by the practice of the *Primitive times*, by dictates of *Human Reason*, or else by express *Rules* of the Gospel.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

These Canons and Forms, in our Liturgies, are the best that are visibly now extant to us, upon sober Consideration.

AN D, how shall we be able to maintain these the Best, which some will not grant to be good at all?

The Herd of *Señaries* are all of them nibbling at our *Liturgy*. Their work is to *defame*, and if they can, to *destroy*; yet of all things, they most virulently aim at the *Publick Service* of the Church.

We remember with grief enough what late storm brought these *Locusts*; but yet we may complain, no contrary wind hath driven them quite away, there are yet too many in our Coasts.

We hear them still maliciously and unreasonably Object:

1. *That our Liturgy is taken out of the Romish Missal; the greater part of it is Popish Trumpery; the Papists use it, &c.*

Malice, whose end is alwaies to wound and do mischief, never boggles to compass it by the most unlawful means. What she can never hope to bring about by publishing *truths*, she is ready to attempt by raising *slanders* and *false suggestions*. For certainly none that are not wilfully ignorant, but must acknowledge, that most of our *Prayers, Confessions,*
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and Responses, used in our Divine Service, are taken either out of the *Holy Scriptures*, or out of the *Liturgies* of the Primitive and purest Ages, before ever the Court of *Rome* had exalted it self, or proudly had usurped the Supremacy and Headship above the Church of Christ.

But suppose it be granted, what we cannot deny, That many things are used in our *Liturgy* by us, which are to be found in the *Romish Missal* or *Breviary*, the question is, whether the things be good and lawful of themselves or not? Doubtless, we are not to forbear things that are good and lawful, because *bad men* make use of them; then we must not use either *meat*, or *drink*, or *cloth*, or *Sun*; we must necessarily go quite out of the World.

I shall thankfully partake of the *meat* that is wholesome, although *wicked* and *unclean men* sometimes eat of it. I shall willingly embrace any *holy Truth*, though confessed by the *Father of Lies*.

I see *light* and *darkness* may be in the same Subject, *health* and *sickness* in the same Body, *good* and *evil* are in the same Persons.

I shall pluck a *wholesome Herb*, and make use of it, though I find it in a dirty Ditch: I'll throw away a *poysonous Weed*, though in a Garden.

And, if I can discern, I shall decline what is *bad*, though I see it in the most Vertuous; and follow what is *good*, though in the most Licitious.

If *Evil men* give good gifts to their Children; If *Jews* or *Papists* offer to God a sacrifice of Praise,
and

and use such *words* or *actions* as may best promote the right exercise of true Religion; I shall think it my duty, in all things that are *good* and *lawful*, to follow them.

Object. 2. In our Liturgy are (they say) *vain Repetitions, dead Sacrifices, empty Forms; void of that life and affection which is necessary for Gods service.*

And now, who does not see the *weakness* and *malice* of our Opposers in this Accusation, charging the fault upon the *Forms*, which is properly laid upon them that inconsiderately make use of them. For the vanity is in the *Persons* that are careless, not in the *Repetitions*, if rightly attended. For, if thou beest well disposed, *Repetitions* will awaken thy *Consideration*, and not becalm or bedead, but quicken and heighten *Devotion*.

Deadness of Affection is a fault, but certainly the *Forms* or *Repetitions* are not guilty of it; the fault is in thy *heedlessness*.

'Tis not just to impute that fault to the *Offering*, that is in *thy self* that art to tender it.

Thou who wilfully opposest thy *self*, restrain thy wild, wandring *Thoughts*, summon thy *Intention*, banish thy *Dulness*, quicken thy *Devotion*, never doubt it, all will succeed well in using these *Forms*; I dare ingage, both thou and thy sacrifice will be accepted.

Object. 3. They are offended at the length of the *Prayers*. For using all the *Forms* as they are prescribed in our Liturgy, takes up (say they) too much *Time*, that the *Gifted* man hath not his full liberty of exercising himself in preaching, with which the
godly

godly People are most delighted. Common-Prayer would be omitted, or shortned, that Sermon may not be hindred. This they take for granted, that Preaching is to be preferred before Praying.

Ans. The Allegation is false and ridiculous in every particular. For, the Forms prescribed are not too long, nor so long as they necessarily hinder Preaching; both may very conveniently be done.

But, what if the *Gifted man* were hindred from offering his strange Fire, his wild effusion in Praying or Preaching; Certainly if this were in the compass of the length of our Common-prayers to be prevented, it would prove not their fault but their commendation.

What unhappy Consequences have happened from Ministers ostentation of *Eloquence*, *Parts* and *Gifts*, its notoriously evident among us. While the People having their idolized Teachers Persons in Admiration, they have divided into Factions and Parties, and have disturbed the peace and *Unity* of the most flourishing Church of the World.

And if it be seriously considered, what unsound *Doctrines*, what distracting *Notions*, what pernicious *Opinions*, what erronious and *Dividing Principles*, have been published and entertained of late years in the midst of us?

It cannot be unreasonably concluded, That there should be limits and boundaries set, in this present juncture of Affairs, to restrain the wildness of some mens Preaching as well as Praying, certainly would much conduce to the settling of Order and
Peace

Peace both in Church and Nation.

But, if as *Common-prayer* is wisely enjoined, so *Preaching* must be freely tolerated, let it be soberly considered, which of the two, if we cannot do both, is most conveniently omitted, either *Prayers* or *Sermon*.

Our *Prayers* are deliberately composed, in *Preaching* there is too oft sudden and unjustifiable effusions.

Prayers directly and immediately tend to Gods Honour; *Preaching* oft doth not, but to the distracting of the People.

In *Prayers* God is served and worshipped; by *Preaching* mens humors are gratified and fancies pleased.

In *Sermons* at best, we do but hear what we should do; in *Prayers*, we do what we hear is fit to be done. *Sermons* edifie our knowledge, *Prayers* our practice.

In short, As much as *doing* is to be preferred before *hearing*, *Practice* before *Notion*, the certain knowledge of God before the uncertain knowledge and the humouring our selves; so much without doubt ought our attendance upon *Praying* to be preferred, before running after *Preaching*.

But since it would be little conducing to my own content, or the Christian Readers delight, or the wilful Opposers credit, to rake into that puddle of *Reproach*, that from unreasonable prejudice they have, falsely and maliciously, vomited up against our best composed *Liturgy*; I forbear advisedly, and declare my Judgment freely under my hand, in the Reverend Dr. *Hammonds* words, Ever since the
Reproaches

Reproaches of men have taken confidence to vent themselves against our Liturgy, there hath been nothing but air and vapour vomited out against it. Objections, of little force to conclude anything, but resolute, contumacious ignorance or malice of the Objectors.

For when we consider, how full our Liturgy is of Canons and Forms directing every Believer, in true Religion, to the acknowledging and worshipping of God: That all the *Promises* are confessed to be relied upon, as the ground of our Confidence. That all the *Rules* are repeated that are directive to a Gospel Obedience, and that we signify our Desires and Resolutions to observe and conform to them. When all the *Evils* we fear are deprecated, and all the necessary *Blessings* we can desire are petitioned for.

And when I consider that comely Order, and decent Uniformity, of the whole Society that submit to our Churches pure Directions, that upon diligent search, I cannot perceive any of the *Popish* paint of *superstitious, needless Ceremonies*, that may cause a suspicion of dishonest Intentions. Nor contrariwise, the least *careless, forlorn Irreverence*, that may bring a disesteem and contempt upon our Exercises, as is seen in the Meetings of our *Schismatics*, whose open Prophaneness extract not only a suspicion, but a just censure of the Meeters *Atheisme* and *Infidelity*.

I must conclude with that Blessed Martyr, Father to our Gracious Sovereign upon the Throne, upon search and dispute, *That our Liturgy of England is absolutely the Best, that is visibly extant to us in the World.*

If it were possible, it can be neither pleasure to my self, nor profit to others, to take a survey of all the *Liturgies* that have been and are in the World; to understand, compare, weigh, and judge distinctly of every of them; to set out the redundancies of some, and the defect of others; to pass sentence, and give preference to what is most absolute. This is more than ever any man did fully, or can do, in that short time of his Pilgrimage that is measured out unto him.

This cannot be expected, nor is it necessary; for when our discourse is directed to our Fellow-Subjects of *England*, who are generally Christians of an ordinary Capacity; to cast an eye upon those *Liturgies* that may fall under their general Cognizance, may in this case suffice us.

A mans Choice cannot extend beyond the dimensions of his knowledge. We neither chuse nor refuse any one thing before another, but we understand and discern either a surpassing goodness or inconvenience in it. And it is as natural for discursive Creatures to chuse what is best, as to desire what is good.

And for Believing Societies to have *Canons* and *Forms*, for the People to abide by, is not only expedient but necessary; and this, I dare say, hath been proved sufficiently.

Sith then, we of this Church of *England*, as is pretended, have a *Liturgy* prescribed, in which Dissenters themselves can alleadge nothing absolutely unlawful; frowardly to lay this quite aside, or to change it for another, which is less useful and unwarrantable, is unreasonable and unnatural.

For

For the generality of my Fellow-Subjects to linger after the *Romish Mass* is not to be defended, nor excused: For in *Prayers*, or *Praises*, or *Confessions*, how shall he that is unlearned concur, seeing he doth not clearly understand what is said.

And the same may be said in this case in regard of all other *Liturgies* used among us; There can be no desire of them, of which most of the Commonalty have little (if any) understanding.

Besides, in the *Romish Missal* or *Breviary*, how many things of *Faith* and *Manners* are prescribed; how many *Confessions* and *Prayers* enjoined, which neither by Scripture or Reason can be defended or justified, and this by our Learned Pens have been cleared to the World sufficiently.

But for our *Liturgies*, I dare challenge the most professed Enemy, the most wilful Recusant, to instance, if he can, in any immodest or light action that is enjoined in any unmeet Expression that is prescribed.

Let them say what is *superfluous* or *redundant*, that can be rescinded: What is *defective* and *imperfect*, and what ought to be supplied and completed.

So that upon exact scrutiny, I must moderately and truly give in this Return, *That the Canons and Forms in our Liturgy are so ordered, that they plainly direct the whole Congregations to most clear significations of their Religious Intentions.*

Our *Preparations* at our first Assembling, are such, as must beget in us a holy Reverence and godly fear.

Our

Our *Confession of sins*, such as are declarative of our unfeigned sorrow and humility.

Our asking *Pardon*, so ordered as we express our Confidence.

Our *Suffrages* short, but indicative of true Piety and Devotion.

Our *Articles of Faith* to be confessed, are compendiously composed, but fully and comprehensively.

Our *Hymns* used, and *Doxologies*, so Heavenly, as may well become a quire of Angels.

All our *Common Service*, so reasonably, so piously ordered and disposed, as our dissenting Enemies dare not be so impudently malicious, as openly to condemn it of sinfulness or unlawfulness. Neither can I ever expect (as wise as they are in their own eyes) that they will be so presumptuous, as to attempt the presenting us with a Form of Publick Worship, with all the precise method of that Order and Decency, that ought to be used in it, in which they will pretend to better and transcend the excellency of our *Liturgy*, which is prescribed and used among us.

—*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.*

And until they can do this, their wisdom is to study to be quiet, and conform to this, till they can find out and propose a better Method of our publick Worshipping of God beyond all exceptions, that they will abide by.

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And

And now, I say, what Subject of the Church of *England* can reasonably desert or reject our *Liturgy*, which is visibly the best that is extant to us upon sober Consideration?

And how can I but stand amazed, that the *Common Service*, as prescribed, should by so many of our Neighbours not only be neglected but contemned, when it can neither be justly blamed nor amended.

Certainly, I am not uncharitable (but should be too conniving if I did forbear) to declare a want of Religion and Reason in those men, that run away to the flocks of our pretended Companions, that hold no Uniform Communion that is Visible; When, no worship of God is evident; no practice of the Peoples Devotion; no vocal Confession of the Believers Faith; no offering any sacrifice of Praise: and yet, every Christian is bound to Conform in all those things, as well as the Minister, in every Believing Congregation.

Why will ye go away from us, *O ye of little faith*, we hold fast the words and practice of eternal life.

Friendly

Friendly Perswasives to my Country-men.

Come then, my beloved Countrymen, since these things are so, that *an Uniform profession of Faith must be maintained in Believing Societies*, and sith by our *Liturgy*, according to Gospel Rules, we are ordered and directed to this reasonable Service. Let us lay aside all prejudice and partiality, all contentious humors. Let there be no longer a Spirit of *Opposition*, or wilful *Contradiction*, be found among us. Let us follow after the exercise of those things that make for *Peace*, and wherewithal we may best edifie one another. *Whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure*, let's think and conclude of the practice of such things. Let us endeavour to bend our selves to the quiet of the Church of God, and to *hold the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*. Let's evidence, the God of hope hath filled us, as with all joy, so with all peace in *Believing*. There is but *One Truth*, but *One Faith* among us; let there be but *One Spirit*, but *One Conscience*. Let us shew, the God of *Patience* and *Consolation* hath granted us *to be like-minded*. Let's not forsake the *Assembling of our selves together*, as the manner of some is, but let us hold fast the form of sound words, and the profession of our *Faith without wavering*. Let there be no divisions, but let us speak the same thing, to declare we are perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.

Let there be no divisions among us about *Ministers*, account of them as *Stewards* of the *Mysteries* of God; and yet your *Faith* stands not in the *wisdom* of Men, but in the *power* of God. Have their *Persons* not so much in admiration, as if lords of your *Faith* by *Preaching*, only esteem them highly for their *works* sake, whereby they lead you to the *holding fast* the *Profession* of your *Faith*, and the true exercise of right *Godliness*, which hath the promise, &c.

And, as in your speeches you declare your *Unanimity* in your holy *Assemblies*, so in your *Behaviour* let there be *Uniformity*. Let your *Conversation* be such as becometh the *Gospel* of *Christ*, and let all things be done decently and in order, and reverently as in the *House* and presence of the living *God*. Worship *God* in the beauty of *Holiness*, so as if an *Unbeliever* come among you, he may be convinced, and fall down and worship *God* also, because he sees, verily, of a truth *God* is in the midst of you. It is the fit time for *Christ* to be born in us, when *Unity* is among us. In a calm night the *Dew* descends to the *Earths* refreshment; and *Grace* is like to come down to us when we are in the way of *Peace*. Finally, *Brethren*, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, as directed, and the *God* of love and peace shall be with you.

A M E N.

Propo-



Proposition II.

The wilful Omission or Recusancy of any Believing Subjects Conformity to those Rules, is an heinous Sin, and a dangerous Disobedience.



Heartily beg of the Candid Reader so much charity to believe it as true, what I publickly declare and avow, That I am a Reformed Christian of the Church of England, and, that I shall never attempt to perswade my fellow Subjects to any practice that is ungodly, or contrary to the Rules of the Gospel. And be assured (whoever thou art) that I sincerely desire every man may come to the knowledge and practice of Truth and be saved; and therefore I dare not by a flattering compliance,

or connivance, sooth any man in the error of his way, which will lead him securely to his destruction. And I dare not daub over Recusancy, as some desire, with a paint and varnish of a trifling weakness or infirmity, or palliate it over with a false pretence of tender Conscience, when it will prove, if considered, an heinous sin, and a dangerous Disobedience.

Give me leave therefore without offence, if thou beest willing to be Informed, to bring to thy Remembrance what I have formerly delivered, and am ready to defend concerning our Canons and Rules of Uniformity, prescribed about the Publick exercise of Religion.

1. Our Governours, as subordinate under Christ, do not Rule their Believing Subjects, arbitrarily; but by Laws subordinate to the Rules of the Gospel.

2. All that the power of Governours can reach unto, in a Visible Church, is to order and direct Externals in the publick exercise of Religion.

3. That the right exercise of true Religion, is the open profession of Faith.

4. Of that open Profession, there must be Uniformity.

5. Every Baptized Subject of England is obliged to conform to such Laws prescribed. For to command or prohibit, as the Gospel directs, is warrantable.

And all our Laws, to the Common sort of Believing Subjects, are according to those Rules.

If Natural, or expressly Evangelical, there can be no dispute, if a Christian, thou art bound to obey.

And

And if the Laws be Positive or Humane, and not against Nature, or Injust; thy Obligation is divine, and thy Submission is natural, being thou art to submit to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake.



S E C T. I.

Let us determine and agree, what we are to understand by those Laws, and the Conformity to them, that the Believing Subject of England is bound to observe.

TH E Governours aim and care is not only at the keeping and diverting from the People what is *grievous* and *inconvenient*, which will render their lives wretched and miserable; but also at the compassing and injoyning the things that are *good* and *pleasant*, which make their lives happy and comfortable.

For these two distinct ends, there must be two distinct sort of Laws. Some *Prohibitive*, forbidding and restraining *Transgression*, which is the way to divert Evils feared; some *Preceptive*, by conforming to which Laws, the People might attain the *Good* designed and propounded.

And because Man is not to be satisfied, barely with *escapes* of Evil and Misery, but with obtaining a confluence of *Blessings*, which may minister

some competency of *Content* to him in this his present condition ; therefore he is to make it his business, not only to respect the *Laws Prohibitive*, but those that are *Preceptive* are to be regarded especially.

And when we observe , the *Happiness* of Man doth not only depend upon the *love* and *comforts* communicated from his Neighbour , but upon the *favour* and *blessings* of God ; hence it must evidently appear, that as man, in a Society, ought to have respect to the *Laws of Honesty* , that he live quietly and comfortably with his Neighbour ; so is he to regard the Rules that direct him to the practice of true *Piety* , which will make him to walk acceptably before his God. And the *Preceptive* Laws that concern *Piety* ought primarily to be regarded , because the Conforming to them, will bring upon him the Blessings of God.

Now we are to agree to understand, that our present Discourse relates to Laws of this sort, *viz.* *Preceptive Laws of Piety* that are wisely and piously ordered by our Governours , according to Gospel Rules , that command the *decent* and *reverent* attendance, and *joynt Concurrence* of every Believing Subject of *England*, in the Uniform exercise of Religion, as in the Book of *Common-Prayer* is ordered and prescribed.

These *Preceptive Rules* of Uniform worship, as in our *Liturgy* the People are directed , are the Laws by us intended, and ought by Believing Subjects of *England*, principally to be regarded , and *conformity* to such Laws ought to be observed accordingly.

For as a *Negative Happiness* will not content us, no more ought a *Negative Holiness* : so a Believers care must be, to be truly *vertuous* and *religious*. The holy Soul, that intends a thorough *sanctification*, rests not satisfied that he is not *vicious*, when he knows his being *vertuous* and *truly religious* is that which will please his God.

For to cease from evil of *sin* only, will keep us from evil of *punishment* and *judgment* which is threatned ; but to do *well*, is that which will bring us to good, and to the *mercies* and *blessings* promised.

Conformity then to *Preceptive Rules of Piety* is necessary for our *comfort* and *well-being*, and one of the principal Duties of an *English Christian*. And the fashioning and framing of his *Words* and *Actions*, according to the *Canons* and *Lines* in our *Liturgy* prescribed and directed, is that *Conformity* we now understand. That our *Converses* and *demeanour* in the *Worship of God*, be accommodately ordered and commensurate to the *Rules of the Liturgy*. That none of the lines or lineaments be carelessly pretermitted. That upon our private fancy, no tumor or exuberancy be added superstitiously, that we admit of neither *excess* or *defect* that may spoil that beauty of *Holiness*, whereby we may represent an exact symmetry of parts, according to that exquisite Original and Copy which is set before us.

This I mean by that *Conformity* we are to attend and heed. Happy should we be if a People once in such a case ; yea, blessed should we be, if we could thus *decently Worship our God*.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

*Wilful Omission or Recusancy of this Conformity,
is a Sin or Disobedience.*

There be two great mistakes that our Pharisaical Fiduciaries are eminently guilty of about Omission. One is, *that omission of Carnal sins prohibited, Presents them Saints, and is all the vertue by them desired*; the other is, *that the omission of external duties of Piety that are commanded, is no sin, and is not at all feared*. But as pure as this Generation may seem in their own eyes, yet in neither cases can they make it appear, that they are cleansed from their wickedness, when from the first mistake they swell with *Pride*, and from the second mistake they must disdain *Humility*.

They say, *They are not open Blasphemers, nor Riotous, nor Thieves, nor Adulterers, nor Murthurers*, and we may believe them; yet while this *negative Holiness* content them, they are ready to account themselves Righteous, and despise others. Thus they choose easiest Duties, and neglect the greater, advance one to the suppressing of another, and, without regret, securely pass by obedience to *Preceptive Rules*, and with a partial and piecemeal *Conformity* they deceive themselves. But we have otherwise learned the mind of Christ.

For in reason, when *Vertue* lies *in medio*, and is only a streight line and tendency to Happiness, as
Mora-

Morality teach us; the *defect* as well as the *excess*, will keep us from ever coming at this end. And when every Believer is bound to obey the *Gospel*, that expects to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, as *Divinity* teacheth us.

Certainly, bare *unholiness*, *uncharitableness*, *infidelity*, *unpeacableness*, that are but cessations and suspensions of those due Acts that be commanded, and ought not to be left undone, cannot content any true Believer. For no person, be he either *Child*, *Servant*, or *Subject*, if he neglects to do what he is enjoined, but is justly looked upon as *disobedient*. To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin, Jam.4.17.

But when *Omission* arrives at that height, to be *wilful*, it become that sin we would have notified and avoided. When men declare their *love* and *choice*, by an open and continued separation from Holy exercises as commanded, such wilful *Omission* is rightly called *Recusancy*; being an open and declared refusal of doing that service and holy Duties they are commanded.

And, if seriously considered, I know not how our Officers, in our several Parishes, can be excused or acquitted of the guilt of *Perjury*, when of forty Persons, that wilfully omit and despise the *Divine Service* and *Sacrament*, they cannot in their Returns at *Affizes*, or *Sessions*, find one open *Recusant*; when certainly, a wilful *Omission* or *Recusancy* of due Obedience, deserves both *sentence* and *punishment*, when it is an *heinous sin*, and *Disobedience*.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

Wilful Omission or Recusancy of Conformity to these Laws, is an Heinous sin and Disobedience.

SO much the Nobler the *Law* fixed and established is, so much the greater the sin, and the more grievous the *transgression* of that Law.

Now *Conformity* to the first and greatest Law of *Piety*, is a nobler Vertue than *Conformity* to the Rules of *Charity*; and *aversion* from that Conformity must be a greater sin, because then we turn away from G O D, who is infinitely better than Men, or any Creature whatsoever.

The first and greatest Commandment is, *To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*: these must respect God indeed; but, *with all thy strength*, this must relate to Man. For the *strength* of a visible Christian is demonstrable to Man by *outward actions*, when *strength* exerts itself by doing what is Commanded.

Omission therefore, of a visible exercise of *Piety*, must be concluded, in reason, a sin of the greatest size, since it is a transgression of the greatest Commandment.

Again, Transgressions of a general, comprehensive Law of *Piety*, are greater than the transgression of a single, particular Law, that command a single Duty. But omission of *Uniformity* prescribed,

bed, is a transgression of a general comprehensive Law of Piety.

Faith comprehends all the duties of Christian Obedience, and what doth it profit a man, in a Visible Church, to say, *he hath Faith*, if he hath no *Works*, and do not make his *faith* appear by *Confession*. If we *know* we must *acknowledge*; if we *believe* we must *speak*. He that offends in this one point is guilty of all, Jam.2.14.

And, if offending against a particular prohibitive Law of *Charity*, renders a man guilty of transgressing every part of that Law, how much more if a man offends a comprehensive Law of *Piety*? In the Judgment of Man, such a Person must be lookt upon to have *denied the Faith*, &c. So, if any man would ask, what is the Name of this sin? it must be answered *Legion*, for *they are many*. When most of the Commandements of the first Table are openly transgressed by this *wilful Omission*.

And, if deliberately considered, it must be acknowledged, That these sins of *wilful Omission* or *Recusancy* of Obedience, to preceptive Laws of *Piety*, are greater sins than sins of *Commission* against the prohibitive Laws of the second Table, that concern *Charity*, in respect of several Circumstances that such Transgressors are involved in, which must needs aggravate these sins exceedingly.

For these sins of *Omission* are open and manifest, but those sins of *Commission* are many times secret and hid. Therefore, many times, sins of *Commission* fall under the Judgment of God only; but sins of *wilful Omission* fall certainly under the judgment

ment and condemnation of Men: and therefore it is undeniably just and reasonable, that Religious Magistrates make severe animadversions upon those sins especially.

And, he that judgeth and condemneth his Neighbour for *Hypocrisie*, though he judgeth truly, yet he judgeth rashly and uncharitably, because such sins are indiscernible to man; but when *Profaness* and *Impiety* are manifest by a *wilful Recusancy*, such sins go before men to Judgment, and Officers may accuse and condemn such notorious Crimes, justly and warrantably.

And sins that are done *impudently* and *shamelessly*, are worse sins than those that are done *modestly* and *closely*.

Now beastly sins of *Commission* are committed secretly, 1 *Thess.* 5.7. they seek the *night* to conceal them, and *darkness* to cover them. But if men will be openly guilty of their Abominations, and not be at all ashamed; if they will declare and publish their sins like *Sodom*, and make their Faces harder than a Rock, and refuse to return, a Visitation is lawful and justifiable upon such *open sin*; and the Magistrate is not just that will not take vengeance upon such wilful Transgressours.

A second aggravation of sin may be, when a sin is *Electively* and *voluntarily* committed. For this must be confessed, that *Vertue* or *Vice* are more or less Meritorious, as they are more or less Voluntary. A sin must be greater that is upon deliberate *Choice* committed, than that which is done upon *surprizal*, through the prevalence of a Temptation, suddenly and inconsiderately.

Now

Now, sins of *Commission* have many of these Excuses; Either men are basely or degenerously indulging the Bestial part, and so are transported with the present impression of some sweet delight that pleaseth the *sense*, which admits of no *deliberation*. Or else through *Pride, Envy, Malice, or Revenge*, which would be satisfied, men have hurried headlong into irregular Attempts. Or else through a *flattering Compliance* with the prevalent Humors of the Times, men have been misled with the Customary practice of a multitude, and have prest, like Beasts, *Non quo eundum, sed quaitur*; Following bad Example to do evil, and without natural affection, not guided by Reason, have fallen into the worst of sins of the worst of Times.

But now, what Temptation or excuse can any man alledge or pretend for *wilful Omission*, or *Refusancy*? Other sinners have had either *pleasure* or *profit* to quicken the Temptation, and make it more active, and more prevalent; but what fruit, what benefit can the *Refusant* alleadge for not doing what is enjoyn'd? He absolutely chooseth the *evil*, and refuseth the *good* voluntarily, without Temptation; sure this sin is to be accounted without excuse.

Another aggravation of a Sin is, when it is done *resolutely* and *obstinately*. Now, what is done *resolutely* and *constantly*, if bad, is worse than what is done *uncertainly*, and *contingently*.

Now, sins of *Commission*, many of them have their abatement and weakning by Age and Time; but sins of *Omission* gather strength by continuance, and make men more indisposed to forsake them.

For

For sins of *Commission*, men are ashamed, weary of them, and forsake them in time; but for sins of *Omission*, we rest securely, and delight in them. In this case, there's no probability men should take care to be *well*, who never are sensible they are *sick*.

They make choice of their *Delusion*, and willingly would be given up to the Continuance of their *Abominations*. We see their *obstinacy*, and resolved *impenitency*. And this must be accounted another aggravation.

Another aggravation of a Sin may be, if it be against a *Promise* and *Covenant* solemnly made to the contrary.

Every man is bound *stare pacis & promissis*, so it cannot reasonably be denied, but a *wilful Omission* of duties of Piety in a Baptized Subject, who hath declared and signified firmly his profession of holy Obedience to the Faith, is far worse than a wilful Omission of a *Jew* or *Infidel*, that never promised observance to *Gospel Rules*, and never made *Profession*.

Heb. 10. The *wilful sin* was not an *invisible*, but a *visible* Recidivation; For this must in reason be accounted a visible and interpretative *Apostacy*, *drawing back, and falling off from his Profession*, declared by his *wilful omission*, which by Promise and Vow he had engaged himself to perform. And what sense the Divine Author, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, had of this sin, is easie to be gathered from this tenth Chapter.

The Holy Author directs his Epistle to a Society of Believers by *Baptisme*, externally united and sancti-

sanctified to be visible Members of a *Christian Society*, that had not power to discern *spirits* or *intention*, but judge they might of *Externals*, *words* or *actions*. He wrote therefore to them, *v. 23, 24, 25*. to take care of their *Carriage* and *Conversation* that was sensibly to be discerned in their Religious Assemblies. That they did not decline or forsake *Assembling*; nor in those Assemblies, *profession of Faith*, nor *mutual Exhortation*, nor *provocation to good Works*: For the *Blood of the Covenant* by these wilful Omissions, would be accounted an *unholy thing*, and so was *doing despite to the Spirit of Grace*; and so throw away the probable means to get the helpful assistance of the *Spirit of Grace*, which was ready to attend upon them that were frequently busied in those holy Ministrations. For the *Blood of the Covenant* did sanctifie them, as a visible Society of the *Faithful*, to Religious exercises, which if they fell away from, they sinned *wilfully*, and must look for a subsequent punishment.

And now, I humbly beg of my well-meaning Country-men, that *separate* and *withdraw* themselves from us, that they would considerately receive these things with the same spirit that I have written them, without gall of bitterness, or desire of Revenge, and with meekness and holy fear. Be not wise in your own eyes; think soberly of your selves, and your waies: Be *not high-minded but fear*. Be not without fear, to *add sin unto sin*; weigh not things with a *false Ballance*; put not *light for darkness*, nor *darkness for light*, *good for evil*, &c. This will bring woe and abomination.

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This

This the way, while you clamour against others *Superstition*, to be guilty of the same you condemn, while wilfully you stand upon your mistaken *Perswasion*.

I know not how far you may flatter your selves with the Opinion you have assumed to your selves, and gained from others of your *Sanctity*; yet upon right deliberation, you must conclude with me, *While you wilfully omit, or refuse, to conform to the Preceptive Rules of Piety prescribed, you are guilty of transgressing the greatest and most comprehensive Commandement.*

And, if thou beest involved in those Circumstances that usually attend and aggravate these sins; if thou sinnest yet *openly, voluntarily, perfidiously, and impenitently*, thou wilt render thy self guilty of a most notorious Crime; and, without *repentance and amendment*, thou wilt hasten thy own misery, and contributest, to thy power, to bring speedy and inevitable ruine, upon the most flourishing *Church and Kingdom* in the World. And this puts me upon the fourth Section.

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

Recusancy is a dangerous sin, and hurtful Disobedience.

IT is a great part of wisdom, to ponder the way of our feet: And now, because considering the issue and end of our *Actions* will keep us from doing amiss, give me leave mildly to represent, upon an impartial survey, the dreadful consequences of this sin, those cursed effects it certainly brings upon all Orders of men throughout the whole Nation.

The injury it offers to *King* and *Parliament*, and all thy Governours both *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*; while thou declarest manifestly, thou suspectest their *goodness*, doubttest of their *wisdom*, despisest their *Authority*, and to thy utmost (by thy wilful *Recusancy*) intimatest to others, *That they have rashly, and inconsiderately, imposed Commands that are unlawful and unwarrantable*; and by this evil Example, misguidest thy Neighbour into a dangerous Disobedience. For when other sins of *Commission* reach to the injury of a person, or Family or two, this sin of *wilful Omission* is extensively hurtful to all sorts of Men in the Society, and disturbs the publick peace of all that are among us.

These *χίσματα* are dreadful and detestable, not only because, making *Divisions*, they certainly turn

themselves out of *Church-membership*, that are guilty of them; but when these men run into *Disputas*, and separate into *Sects* and *Factions*, and in their Meetings, make it their business to deprave or defame the *Divine Service*, and *Uniformity*, prescribed by Religious Governours; These things must highly aggravate their Crime, and sadly increase our misery, and this we sensibly perceive by too woful experience.

It is no pleasure to me to see, what I heartily bewail, the deplorable estate we are in at this time, in this poor distracted Nation, by that *wilful Recusancy* and *sinful Separation*, that by our tameness and connivance, we have suffered unhappily to thrive and spread among us. When every person and party that hath deserted the Communion of our Church, covers the deformity of this Errour with a Cloak of pretended *Conscience*, and proudly and unyieldingly idolizeth his mistaken *Judgment*, and limits his affection to his own Party of the same *Perswasion*, and betrays his disaffections to those of *sound Judgments*, by venting his *opposition* wrathfully, with bitter *Invectives* against them.

And those Parts and Endowments men should use in *closing* and *healing* our Breaches, they misemploy in *widening* them. Every one is wiser in his own eyes than his *Ruler* or *Teacher*, and pertinaciously defends his own Fancy, and justifies unyieldingly his own *Perswasion*.

Diversity of mislled *Judgments*, and pretended *Consciences*, have caused an alienation of *Affections*, and hence *wrath* and *bitterness* hath broke out into

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contemptuous Carriages, Sections, and provoking Expressions. That in Church matters our several *Factions* shew nothing but *Ataxy* and *distractiō*. And in matters of State, from mens wilful disobedience to lawful Commands, an inclination is discovered to tend to *Sedition* and *Rebellion*.

The religious *Ruler*, and faithful *Minister*, must needs be grieved and disquieted to see our Reformed Profession so much blasphemed, the *Gospel* and its *Faith*, so much disgraced and despised, and the Name of *Christ* and his *Cause* so much dishonoured.

And what honest heart, that loves the *King* and *Church of England*, but must be sad and bemoan it; That *Peace* and *Love* (which are the cement and glory of any Church and Nation) should, by these our *Divisions*, be seen to wax faint and languish, and be even expiring in the midst of us.

And let any now (that thinks most lightly of the *Divisions*, and stands most for *Liberty*) tell me, if he can, and instance in any one Order of men that is not injured by them. For the *King* and the *Parliament* are rendred Vile, and their *Authority* contemptible, while their greatest and best Laws, about the *Publick exercise of Religion*, are neglected and despised. The *Protestant of England*, that is truly Religious, must be offended and grieved, to see his Neighbour, by his *wilful Separation*, continue in an open and heinous sin.

By this thy *Relations*, *Equals*, and *Inferiours* must be injured in all probability, while thou seducest the poor and weak by thy evil Example, and makest them to think meanly and dishonourably

bly of our established *Liturgy*, the most necessary and the most Religious *Constitution* that is visibly extant in the World.

By this especially hath come the Universal decay of true *Christian Piety*, and epidemical disesteem and averfness from the *publick Worship of God*.

From this, as from a Fountain, hath that deluge of *Sins* flowed forth, that hath overspread, and overwhelmed this unhappy Nation.

We cannot deny but that almost every where we discover *sinful prejudices, superstition, blindness of heart, Rash judging and censuring* both of holy Persons and sound Doctrines; *Pride, vain-glory and hypocrisie; Envy, hatred, malice and uncharitableness*.

We cannot deny, but *Seditions and privy Conspiracies, false Doctrine and Heresie, hardness of Heart and contempt of Gods Word and Commandments*, are too manifestly to be seen in the midst of us.

Wrath, emulations, bitterness, clamour, evil speaking, whispering, backbiting and detraction, lying and slandering, &c. all these sins and miscarriages, are but the numerous and unlucky Off-spring of *Recusancy and wilful Separation*, that I cannot but in anguish of Spirit cry out, *Cursed be the womb of SCHISME that bare these things, and the Paps that hath given them suck.*

For these things sake, if not repented of, the *wrath of God* must hasten upon us as *wilful Children of Disobedience*.

Neither

Neither hath this detestable sin made us thus miserable among our selves, but hath rendred us unhappy among *other Nations*; when it hath brought a dis-repute of us, and a dis-esteem of our *Religion*, almost in all parts of the World.

Turks, Heathens, Pagans, Jews, not only contemn, but blaspheme our *Church* and *Faith*, because of the *divisions* and *dissensions* of our Professors.

And when the concord of Professors *Uniformity* preserve the beauty and loveliness of a Church, which attracts all mens *admiration* and *affection*, undoubtedly *Divisions* and *Factions* must bring that deformity upon any Nation, which must make it *loathed* and *abhorred*.

And how can we in reason expect, that others should desire to be United to us, who are not United among our selves. We can never hope, but they that are without will shun us as *infectious*, as long as this deadly disease cleaves close unto us.

I hear the sad Complaints of my Countrymens fears, *That Popery is like to be brought in among us*. And this I confess is my fear also; for while we wilfully maintain *Divisions* and *Separations* among us, unquestionably we contribute to the utmost to that which we fear to fall upon us: And the way hath not been made more plain this hundred years for the return of *Popery* than we have lately made it by our *Divisions*.

The *Papists* and *Jesuits* very well know, they can never set up their own Church, till they have pulled down ours, which alone stand in competition for *precedence*, and outvies them. And to de-

stroy this our Church of *England*, which is the best ordered in the World, by our *Schisms* and *Sects* we lend our helping hand most effectually. Who doth not see that we are running into that *Bondage* we pretend to abominate, while we endeavour to destroy *Uniformity* as it is prescribed.

For out of the *Visible Church* there is no ordinary way of Salvation; And there is no keeping up the face of a *Visible Church* without *Uniformity*.

If therefore we wilfully persist by our *Schisme* to destroy *Uniformity* in the Church of *England*, when there is none to be found in our *separated Congregations*, what remains, but we must willingly run to the Church of *Rome* if we will be saved.

All these things perpended, it must be concluded, *That wilful Recusancy of Conformity or Schisme, is not only an heinous but an hurtful sin in respect of those within us. It renders us disesteemed and condemned by those without us. It contributes to the introduction and prevalency of Popery into the Nation. And, It is a dangerous sin to Men themselves that are guilty of it, when it renders them liable to the just condemnation both of Man and God.*

We are most affected with those Evils that most nearly touch our selves. Consider then thy own dangerous condition, who ever thou art that *separatest* from the Church of *England*, if thou persistest in thy wilful *Disobedience*, and what must follow by the just Judgment both of Man and God.

Thou

Thou art guilty, at the fairest, of the dreadful sin of *Schisme*, by thy voluntary *departure* and wilful *separation* from the 'Communion of that Visible Church, whereof once a Member. A sin, by St. *Paul*, branded with the odious name of *Carnality*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Are ye not carnal? walk ye not as men?* And, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. the same Apostle directs the Believing Brethren, to set this note and remark upon such as caused and maintained *Divisions*; *they were such as did not serve the Lord Jesus Christ*, and were to be avoided. Their fair *speeches* and smooth *actions* in this case could not acquit but condemn them, whilst both of them were used with this end by them, to deceive the hearts of the simple, and pervert their practice from the Uniform Communion of a Believing Society.

It is sad, but true, that such from Believers *Censure* and *Judgment* (if they will be directed by the Apostle, and perswaded) must lose the reputation of being *Christians*, and be marked and noted for such as are not *servants of Jesus Christ*.

And further, if it be questioned, Whether continuing wilfully in a manifest sin be inconsistent with the *state of Grace*, or not? certainly, upon serious Inquiry, it must be determined *Affirmatively*. And it must be granted, upon the Reasons fore-mentioned, That *wilful Omission* of the necessary Duties of *Piety* is an open sin, and such a sin as withdraw men from the kindly operations of *Grace*, and makes God withhold and turn away his *Spirit* from a People, who waits to be gracious to his Servants, usually, while in the exercise of *Holiness*.

This

This despising of *Holy Duties*, puts a contempt, and offers despite to the *Spirit of Grace* : And certainly, the consequence of that sin is sad enough, that makes God withhold his *Spirit* from men, such *draw back to perdition* by their visible Recidivation.

The effects and consequences of this sin, in probability, will be dreadful (as you have heard) among *Men* ; and there will be a sad issue of this sin from the *Just G O D*, who not only will withdraw his *Grace*, but will manifest his displeasure by his *wrath* which will come upon the *wilful Children of Disobedience*. And good it will be for this sinner in time to consider, That although he may possibly escape the condemning Judgment of *fallible Man*, yet he cannot warrantably promise himself to escape in another day the condemnation of *Christ*. Sins of *Omission*, that are obstinately for the most part persisted in, will fare worse than sins of *Commission* that oftentimes are repented of, and will meet with a more severe Sentence from the mouth of *Christ*.

And the mind of *Christ* is clearly discovered unto us in this particular, *Matt. 25. 41.* when as accursed, they shall hear that fearful *Discedite, Depart ye into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. And the sin he chargeth them with, and sentenceth them for, was a *wilful omission* of Acts of *Charity*. For *I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; Thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; Naked, and ye cloathed me not, &c.*

Now, if for *wilful Omission* of such Acts of *Charity*, sinners shall hear that fearful *Ite maledicti*,
how

how justly may they hear the like dreadful Sentence for omission of Acts of Piety: *You have not worshipped me in the beauty of Holiness; You have not spoken to my Praise, to make my Name glorious; You have not held fast the open profession of your Faith, &c.* For greater sins, there cannot reasonably be expected a lesser Sentence, or easier punishment, from the most just Judge.

For sinning thus wilfully, what can be looked for but Judgment and fiery Indignation. *If he that despised the publick Law and polity of Moses was judged worthy of Death, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that wilfully despiseth those Rules that are commanded by the Gospel of Christ. If any man draw back [wilfully] from his Profession, when the soul of the Apostle took none, what pleasure can the soul of Christ take in him?*

And now my dear Country-men, that have been too long Dissenters, who have stood at distance, and separated from us, I humbly beseech you in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that you would consider, That by your Baptisme you have been dedicated to the Obedience of the Faith of which you have made profession. And, by the Laws of the Gospel you are bound to submit to the Laws of the Land, prescribed for the exercise of Piety. And that wilful Omission, or Recusancy, of Conformity to these Laws, is an heinous Sin, and a dangerous Disobedience. A Transgression against the first and greatest Commandment; against a comprehensive Law of Piety. It is a sin not far off from a dangerous Apostacy.

We

We are sure it is an accursed *Schisme*. It's a sin of direful fruits to them within us; of dreadful consequences to them without us. It's probably an introduction and advance to *Popery*, in the midst of us. It's a sin displeasing to the *Spirit of Grace* and *Christ*. I would have so much charity to perswade my self, that many of you have been drawn into this sin *ignorantly*, through *Unbelief*.

It is not my intent to write these things to shame you, but, as beloved, in meekness to warn you. Knowing all these Terroures, I would perswade you as men, soberly to consider the fearful dangers of this Sin, and to return to a right mind, and practice that which is warrantable, and to bend your selves to the *peace* of the Church, and *Unity* in the Worship of God. Mark them that have caused *Divisions*, and hereafter avoid them. Let us follow *Peace* with all Believers, and the *practice of Holiness*, that we may come at last together to the sight of God.

And for you that have not *separated* from us, but have associated with us in the Faith of the Gospel, go on, as *Just Ones* should, to live the life of Faith, of which you have made profession. Be not of those that draw back to perdition, but of those that believe to the saving of your souls. Be not led away with the Error of the wicked, to fall from your *steadfastness*. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them. Come not into their secrets, nor nigh their Habitations. Do not fawningly flatter, or countenance them; for thy *connivance* and *lenity* will strengthen

strengthen them. Blow not the coals of these Sinners, least thou be consumed with the flames of their wild fire.

Let this be our main design, to banish all *Factions* and *Schismes*, which this day are the shame, and to bring back that *Uniformity* in the Worship of God, which was once this Nations glory. Let's mind those things which tend to *peace* and *unity* in *Divine Service*, whereby we may best edifie one another. Let us, as Brethren, be *stedfast and unmovable*, abounding in this work of our God, forasmuch as we know our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

But if any wilfully fall back, and obstinately continue in this sin, let such take notice, That Judgments are justly prepared for Scorners, and stripes for the backs of Fools.

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Proposition III.

The threatning and determining of Punishments against such wilful Transgressors, is according to the dictates of Human Reason, and the constant practice of the Church of God.



THE Transgressor we mean, is the *Recusant* who wilfully omits to conform to those *Canons* and *Forms* prescribed and ordered in our *Liturgy*, which are agreeable to the *Rules of the Gospel*. And this *wilful Omission* in every *Baptized Subject*, how slight or trivial so-
 ever

ever it may seem to be, I soberly and deliberately affirm and maintain to be a worse sin than *Murder, Theft, Adultery*, or any other single sin of Commission; whereby the prohibitive Rule of *Charity* is transgressed, which is to be detested and avoided by every Believing person, who would live comfortably in any Believing Society.

For it being a *Transgression* of the first and greatest, and most comprehensive Law of *Piety*, it must be a greater sin than that which *transgresseth* a particular prohibitive Law that concerns *Charity*; that sin being a *wilful aversion* from that way that directly leads to that full content and happiness, which ought to be intended. And this we cannot but advisedly conclude, when this sin, for the most part, as we may sensibly perceive, is attended with those circumstances, which must aggravate the Crime exceedingly.

For when we observe such *Transgressors* run into this sin, not inconsiderately through *surprizal*, but deliberately and electively; not modestly, but impudently; not uncertainly or contingently, but constantly and obstinately; when they strive to be guilty of these Abominations, contrary to *Vows* and *Resolutions*; and when we consider the dreadful consequences, what can we do less than without rashness conclude, That such are *beinous Transgressors*, and *dangerously Disobedient*.

And when such *Transgressors* are very rarely converted or amended by *monitions* or *perswasions*, it is but reasonable and necessary that Religious Governours (if it can be) should restrain them by the threatening and predetermination of *Punishments*.

For

For when *Governours* are to be set over Societies, to promote their publick good and happiness, it is just and reasonable, not only by proposing *Rewards* they should encourage their People to Religious and Vertuous Duties, which will render them happy and comfortable, but also by threatning and predetermining of *Punishments*, to restrain and deter them from evil and enormous Actions, which will render their lives wretched and miserable.

They mistake dangerously, and wander no little out of the way, who make it their work to defame the *threatning* and *determining* of Punishments with the odious slander of *Malice* and *Bitterness*, when these things are evidences of the Rulers *Love* and *Care*, who are set over a People by God to be a Terror, and affright the People from doing Evil by such manifest Determinations.

If Persons were so well disposed, that they would be perswaded to be good by *Counsels* or *Monitions*, or would be so ingenious as to be drawn to Religious and Vertuous Actions by proposal of *Rewards*, then my mercy is such, as I would have *threatning* and *determination* of *Punishments* forborn.

But, when we see Men are led by *Sense* and *Custom* more than *Reason*, and are generally vain in their Imaginations, disorderly in their Affections, wild and precipitantly irregular in their Actions, it is needful to limit and circumscribe this their beastly *Exorbitancy* with an Hedge of Thorns, and to bound them with a Fence of *Punishments*. When *foolishness* is bound up in most mens childish hearts,

hearts, that incline them to *extravagancy*, it is but the fatherly love and care of good *Rulers*, by the Rod of *Correction*, to drive it away. Thus are they truly represented to be *Patres patriæ*, and *Rulers* cannot be blamed for harshness, if they carry themselves towards their *Subjects*, with the same tenderness that the best *Fathers* carry themselves towards their *Children*.

It cannot reasonably be accounted a sign of an unnatural *Cruelty*, but an indication of a discreet *Mercy*, for a Father to threaten and shake the Rod over his Child; when he does not this with a design to *vex* and *torture* him, but with an intent to restrain him from *inconsiderateness* and *vanity* that will distract him, and to move him to be circumspect, to receive that *instruction* which he desires should be instilled into him.

And thus it is with the good *Rulers* in their threatning of *Bonds*, *Stripes* or *Death*, upon such or such Transgressions. It cannot be thought, their design in this is to *torment* and *ruine* their *Subjects*, but only by setting the inconveniencies and grievances that attend *exorbitancies* before their eyes, they would stop them, and divert them from irregular courses, and move and quicken them to the care of conformity to their *Rules* and *Directions*, which will certainly felicitate them.

And in all this, They are but Gods *Deputies*, and shew themselves like him whom they ought to represent, who used this method to his own People when he gave the Law at *Sinab*, when there was *thundrings* and *lightnings*, noise of the *Trumpet*, and the *Mountain smoking*; these all to

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work

work in the People an *holy fear*, which is the beginning of wisdom, to depart from evil that they sin not, and to quicken them to observe his holy Commandements.

And sure we cannot in reason think, that either God, or the Ruler, designs *vexation* or *destruction* when they threaten them. It is natural to them to shew *Mercy* and *Compassion*. They are not inclined to *afflict willingly*, nor to *greive the Sons of men*. They are loath to *torment* or *destroy*, who would have all men come to the practice of *Truth* and be saved.

He never can be imagined in reason, to intend *wounding* or *destruction*, who gives warning before hand of the blow; by that the Creature prepares it self (if it hath either *sense* or *reason*) to guard it, or escape it. The threatning of *Misery*, *Death*, or *Hell*, is a *Mercy*, without which we were like securely to run upon them.

If *Miseries* were absolutely decreed or determined, that were *Cruelty* indeed; but when threatened conditionally, that is a *Mercy*.

Thus it is evident, *Destruction is of thy self*. Charge not unjustly and injuriously that as a fault, upon *God* or thy *Rulers*, which by thy own guilt thou pullest upon thy own head.

They threatned it upon condition of thy *Transgression* and *Disobedience*, so 'tis thy *wilful Disobeying* that gives thee up voluntary to the punishment. Thou art contented to torment thy self. Thou sawest the danger, and wouldst run into it. Thou knewest the punishment, and wouldst pull it upon thy own head. Thou conspiredst against thy
own

own peace and safety. That thou perishest, it is thy own choice ; for chusing the *Sin*, thou didst chuse the *Punishment*. Thy Blood lies upon thy self. Thou perishest without others fault, and leavest thy self without excuse.

Thus it is evident, *Unnatural Cruelty* is falsely and injuriously charged upon *God* or the *Rulers*, for threatening or determining *Punishments* ; when the Offender only is Cruel to himself, who *voluntarily* (though he hath warning) runs upon them.

Again, *Rulers*, which are *Gods* on Earth, shew themselves most Rational, when they shew themselves most to resemble *God*, by manifesting those Divine excellencies to be conspicuously in them, which render *God* glorious in his Providence throughout the World. And this manifestation they most clearly give, when they deliberately determine *Punishments* before-hand, to be inflicted upon open Transgressions.

First, Thus they manifest *Wisdom*: For if determinations of *Punishments* were sudden upon a provocation of a sensible Injury, they might be suspected and deemed the irruptions of a disorderly *Passion*; but when fixed before hand, they cannot but be judged the result and product of sober *Reason*. And that is *wisdom* or *prudence*, which ordereth and disposeth fit and suitable means to a right end.

Now the right end and mark that *Governours* are to intend, is to promote the good and prevent all evil from the Society. Now the means to prevent evil, is to divert People from Actions that are

irregular and vitious, which are the cause of all *Miseries* that happen on a Nation.

Now no such hindrance or restraint can be put upon People from *evil actions*, as to put them upon the thoughts and considerations of those *miseries* and *inconveniences* that will succeed. And this is most probably done by the publication of those determined *Judgments* and *Inconveniences* that must inevitably follow upon *Irregularities*. These are most likely to prove the most effectual means, to keep *rational Creatures* from running into them.

For, *Malum quâ malum, non est eligendum* ; No man chooseth what is absolutely Evil, either *sin* or *greivance*. No man will persist obstinately in that way, that in the end, if he turns not from it, he sees will *ruine* him undoubtedly.

Evil of *Misery* before a mans face (unless he be mad) will make a man turn from evil of *Iniquity* ; so the publication of the Magistrates certain determination of *Judgment* and *Miseries*, unavoidably to happen upon wilful Transgressors, is the manifestation of the Rulers *Prudence*, being the most probable means to keep their Subjects from *sin* and *destruction*.

2. The *second* thing wherein the good Rulers are to manifest their likeness to God, would be *Purity*, and *abhorrence of Sin*.

Now, how can this *Purity* be manifest in God or his Rulers more clearly, than by executing *Judgments* upon Transgressors ; by ordaining *Arrows* against such *Persecutors*, and preparing for them,
accord-

according to their Merits, the *instruments of death*. How can this be made known better, than by causing the dreadful effects of their wrath to come upon the *wilful children of Disobedience*.

Should they be silent, and not manifest their *displeasure* thus against *wickedness*, the *secure Sinners* would be ready to think that *they were altogether such as themselves*; but determining to take vengeance upon the *Ungodly*, they discover themselves of purer eyes than, with approbation, to *behold Iniquity*.

3. The *third* thing that in reason Rulers are to discover their resemblance to God in, is, *loving Righteousness*, and this is best done by being resolved to do the thing which is right, to give a *meet Recompence*, rendering what is due, and rewarding every man according to his works.

For *Justice* is not an idle, lazy, unactive *Vertue*, as if Rulers might satisfy themselves with barren *notions*, and curious, but unfruitful *speculations*. But she is operative and practical, and where seated, is busie not only in passing a *right Sentence*, but due *execution of Recompence*; and that not according to the *quality* of the Person, but the *merit* of the Work. Not only acquitting the *Innocent*, but condemning the *Guilty*; not only defending and rewarding the *Righteous*, but also punishing the *wilful Sinner*, and pouring out *wrath* and *tribulation* upon the *Unrighteous*, giving them that *Recompence* which is meet.

And therefore we see not only *Scepters*, and *Purses*, and *Crowns*, as Emblems of the *Judges*

Honour, but also *Rods*, and *Swords*, and *Axes*, to signify the design of their Office to be as well a *terror and avenger of them that do Ill*, as a *Countenancer and rewarder of them that do Well*.

The *Sword* is not to be born in vain, but to manifest the Rulers intention to *Righteousness*. He ought to discover it by his threatening and the determination of *Punishments* against wilful Offenders.

Fourthly, The religious Ruler is to shew himself like God in *exactness of Justice*, and to evidence himself *no respecter of Persons*, and to do all things without *partiality*.

Righteousness is best, when in a Land, like the *Sun* in the Firmament, it shineth with equal influence upon the *thatched Cottage*, as on the *Ivory Palace*.

Justice shews all the same, countenance, weighs all things with an equal balance. *Gold* and *Dirt*, *Pibbles* and *Diamonds*, according to their weight turn her Beam. *Diverse weights and measures* she accounts an *abomination*.

Gods *Deputies* are to incline to *exact Judgment*, and to shew themselves ready to punish the *rich and mighty*, as soon as the *poor and contemptible*. And this is best done by Governours fixing and predetermining of *Punishments* upon the Offence, without respect to the *quality* or *relation* of the Offender.

Thus *Impartiality* and *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Purity*, these Divine graces, are best discovered in Gods *Deputies*, which, unquestionably, is the most

most reasonable thing in the World.

One thing remains yet to be proved, which is asserted in this Proposition, *That threatening and determining of Punishments, by Rulers, upon such wilful Transgressors, is according to the constant practice of the Church of God.*

And, if we consult the prophane *Histories* of all Ages and Nations, we shall find, never any People joyned in Society of any Religion, *true or false*, but had their determinations of *Punishments* upon those that were openly *disobedient*, upon those who wilfully *neglected* and *contemned* such Services and Duties enjoyned, that they judged expedient and necessary to procure the favour and blessing of that *Deity* which they agreed to adore. And this is so evident, as is confessed of all, and needs no further proof or illustration.

But if we will consult *Sacred Writ*, which may content us, we cannot but observe, that GOD himself can rarely be found to have taken care of the Conduct of any persons, or People, to direct them in the exercise of an *acceptable Religion*, but he fenced up their way with Thorns, to limit their *aberration*, and restrain them from *sin*, with a Commination of *Penalties*.

Thus, that our First Parents might fear to eat of the *forbidden Fruit*, he threatens them with *Death*, as a certain effect and consequence of their *Disobedience*.

Thus to *Cain*, *If thou dost not well, Sin lies at the door.*

Thus, to move *Abraham* and his Seed to keep his Covenant of *Circumcision*, God threatens,

Gen. 17. 14. *That the uncircumcised Man-child, whose flesh of his Fore-skin was uncircumcised, that Soul should be cut off from his People; for he hath broken my Covenant.*

Thus in that *Theocracy* over *Israel*, every where we read *Curses* denounced upon *Disobedience*; And by *Moses*, and all the *Prophets*, he threatens to visit their sins with *Rods*, and their offences with *Scourges*. So *Levit. 26. 14, &c.* *If you will not hearken to me, and will not do all these Commandments. If you shall despise my Statutes, I will set my face against you for evil, &c. saith the LORD; And, if you will walk contrary unto me, and not hearken, I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you, according to your sins.*

And certainly, it cannot be bad or unreasonable for *Rulers* to use the same method in governing their *Subjects*, that *G O D* used in ruling his own *People, Israel*.

If we consult the method *Christ* used to govern his *Church* in this last *Dispensation*, it is impossible but we must acknowledge, *That a coercive Power, by Commination of Judgments, to restrain from evil, and quicken to good, cannot be unlawful for the Christian Magistrate, when it was practised by Christ himself.*

John the Baptist, that *Messenger* sent by *Christ*, before his face to prepare his waies, presseth upon his *Auditors* the *Gospel* duty of *Repentance*, and this he inforceth from this reason, *because the kingdom of Heaven was at hand.* Which is not to be understood of *Mercies* and *Priviledges* only, that were promised, that might attract and encourage them

them to *Gospel Duties* ; but of *Judgments* and *Punishments* threatned to be executed , which might inforce them to receive and obey the *Gospel*. And there, *Matt.3.* this Holy Preacher tells them, *The Axe was laid to the Roots of the Tree. Fire and Wrath* was coming upon the *unbelieving World*, which could not be escaped but by *Repentance*, and bringing forth fruits worthy of *Amendment of life*.

And *Christ* himself preacheth the same *Doctrine*, and urgeth the necessity of it from the same Motive ; For, except they *Repented*, they should all likewise perish.

And when *Christ* had cured the *Impotent man*, to make him every whit whole , and to restrain him from sin, he affrights him with a *Commination* of a worse thing coming unto him. And to quicken his *Disciples*, to work the works they were sent about while it was day, he minds them of a night coming when no man should work.

Thus, to awaken his Country-men at *Jerusalem*, to know and consider the time of their *Visitation*, and to mind the things that concern their *Peace*, he tells them of a time when *Peace* should be hid from their eyes , and their *Houses* should be left to them desolate.

And thus did the *Apostles*, in the *Primitive times*, who knew the mind , and had the *Spirit of Christ* ; they threatned the *Impenitent* with a day of wrath , a day of vengeance , a day of punishing those with everlasting destruction that knew not God, and obeyed not the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*.

So

So the Author to the *Hebrews*, to deter and terrifie those Baptized persons from *Separation*, and *forsaking holy Assembling*, not to decline mutual *exhortation* and *profession of Faith*, he tells them of a *day of Judgment*, a *day of Vengeance* was suddenly approaching.

And this course was used by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, in the Primitive times, at the planting of the *Gospel*, by threatening of *Judgments* and *Vengeance* to drive their Followers to *Repentance*. Certainly, upon sober consideration, it cannot be lookt upon as unwarrantable, if pious Governours affright from evil those Subjects that else would be *disobedient*, with menacing and determining *Punishments* to be inflicted upon them.

Those frivolous Objections we meet with against this Truth are not worth the mentioning, and, if thoroughly perpended, we may conclude them the issue of *heat* and *passion* of men bent to *Opposition*, and not the words of sober Reason.

And what Spirit they are led with, let any sober man judge, who reproach and defame the just determination of *emendatory Punishments* upon *Recusancy*, and *wilful omission* of necessary Duties (which is an open sin) with the odious name of **PERSECUTION**; and are ready to blaspheme the Rulers and Officers if they threaten these Penalties (much more if they execute them) as *Cruel*, *Tyrannous* and *Antichristian*.

I confess willingly, men that have not quite obliterated the Divine Image, have *bowels of Mercy*,

Mercy, are full of *Pity* and *Compassion*, and *Pugnare cum Natura hominis*, *Dolore quâ Dolor satiari*; for any man to be full of *Malice*, and to contrive with malicious intention to *torment* and endeavour to *destroy* his Neighbour, is unnatural and unchristian, it is a sin.

But thus, unreasonably and falsely, have they done what they can to blast the Repute of an harmless and necessary Duty with a bad Name, when *Punishments* are threatned by the pious Rulers, with the design of Peoples *amendment* and *safety*, not their *torment* or *destruction*.

No man intends his Beasts should run into the Ditch, or hedge of Thorns, wherewith he encompasseth his Grounds; but designs only they may feed safely within due Bounds. It is peevish and ill-natur'd for them to clamour of *Persecution*, when their *Extravagances* are limited, and *safety* endeavoured. But so it is, some froward Tempers, when any waies constrained to be *vertuous*, and restrained from being *vicious*, will cry out they are *persecuted* and *afflicted*.

And, if any *Affliction* or *Punishment* does follow the wilful Transgression of these men, it is not the Magistrates designing or causing; but their own choosing is justly blamed, who pull *Tribulation* upon themselves by the errors of their own waies.

Again, when Rulers and Officers, by agreeing and fixing of *Punishments*, constrain men, through objected Inconveniencies, to reflect upon the evil of their waies and return from them, and to come into the way of Truth, who otherwise would still erre and be deceived; it is *Mercy* of the Ruler to
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the Transgressor, who designs his *salvation*. The *Cruelty* (if any) is to the *Sin*, and its no fault to design its destruction.

Lastly, *Persecution* then is faulty and blameworthy when 'tis for *well-doing* only, when men are hated for *Righteousness* sake, without any cause; when men are industriously pursued, to be vexed and tormented for walking in waies of *holiness* and *righteousness*. This is *Persecution* indeed to be complained of and lamented.

But when *Punishments* are deliberately threatened, and inflicted upon open *Disobedience* and wilful *Recusancy*, these are Acts of *remunerative Justice*, a Nations prop and and glory, and deserve justly to be commended. It is injurious to account this a *Persecution* that deserves to be condemned.

They are therefore deservedly accounted *malicious* and *injurious*, who clamour against the just determination of *Punishments* by pious Rulers against open Transgressions, with censures of a *culpable Persecution*, which is, doing *Justice* and no *Injury*; is *Mercy* and no *Cruelty*; an evidence of the Rulers design of his Subjects *Conversion* and *Salvation*, not of *Vexation* and *Destruction*. Which if it doth happen upon the *obstinate Offender*, he pulls it upon himself by his own choice; it comes not from the *Rulers* intention or resolution.

Another Objection we hear frequently against the threatning and determination of *Punishments* by Christian Magistrates, it is openly complained, *That they force the Conscience of the Righteous, which ought to have its Liberty. Their Conscience, they*
cry

cry it abroad, *ought to be left Free.*

But I appeal to any sober person to judge, whether these Complaints of *Greivances* be not rather fancied and feigned, than possible to be feared or imposed: But some there are that fear where no fear was.

To discourse this Point, in reference to our present State, *Punishments*, threatned by our Governours Laws, for *wilful Recusancy*, is, twelve pence for one Sunday, twenty pound for one Month, to be levied by *Distress*, a Force is threatned upon their *Purse*, and they cry out a Force is offered to their *Conscience*, which is impossible.

For when the Magistrates Sword and Power can reach only to *Goods*, or *Body*, or what is *external* (than this they can do no more) they can have no power of the conclusions of the Understanding, or resolutions of the Will, or any thing *internal*, which we must understand by *Conscience*.

And, suppose the Magistrate can have any power upon *Conscience*, the operation he can have will prove but *Moral*, not *Physical*; to *incline* it, not to *force* it. Neither is this to be conceived feasible by *Man*, which is hardly to be conceived to be done by *God* himself: For *Force* implies a thing to be done of thee, thou art meerly *passive* when Forced, and is scarcely to be imagined of voluntary Agents, who are *active*, and are said to do what they do themselves. *Quicquid fit de te, tu non facis*; Thy *Conclusion* or *Resolution*, is thy own voluntary Act.

And as I said before of the *Liberty*, so I say now of *Force*, It is inconsistent with, and cannot be offered

offered to *Conscience*. Thy *Conscience* is freely thine own, and cannot be forced, and if Force be upon any thing it is upon *externals* only, it cannot be upon thy *Conscience*.

Thou fearest, and criest out of that which cannot be offered thee, namely, *Force of Conscience*; and thou dotest on and idolizest a *Chimæra*, **N O - T H I N G**, what thou canst never find, namely, *Liberty of Conscience*.

Liberty of Conscience thou contendest for, as thou saist. Consider, thou hast not fully exprest thy mind and intendment; thou canst not desire or contend for what thou canst not possibly have. There is something else thou meanest and contendest for; and really, that thing is *liberty of Action, licentiousness of Recusancy*, that thou maist freely transgress the Preceptive Laws of *Piety* without *penalty*. And this thou paintest and gildest over with a varnish and pretence of *Conscience*.

Now, what Rule hast thou that directs thee *wilfully* to omit and refuse the *Publick Exercises of Piety*? And if no certain *Rule*, thou canst have no *sound Conscience*. Thou hast a Rule that forbids *Recusancy*, and it is a sin; Wilt thou pretend a *Conscience*, to continue in sin? If thou hast any *Conscience* in what thou contendest for, it must be an *accusing* or *condemning* one: And well it were if the Sword of the Magistrate could Force this *Conscience* from thee.

I am sure thou desirest amiss to have *Liberty* and *Freedom* to enjoy a *condemning Conscience*. I have no patience to persist any further Arguing; but I have so much charity, not to desist from
praying

praying for you , that our Father would forgive you, *for you know not what you say.*

At last then, study to be quiet , you that *dissent* and *separate* from us , and seriously consider how your heat of *Opposition* and *Contention* hath transported you to the venting of such ridiculous *Fancies*, as certainly, if we do not abjure Reason, we must expect to see them suddenly hissed out of the Nation.

From the Premises then , we must conclude, That the threatning and determining of *Punishments* against *Recusancy* , is *Mercy* and *Compassion*, and ought not to be called *Cruelty* or *Persecution*. That they tend to the *informing* and not *inforcing* of Right *Consciences*. And that 'tis clearly evident, from *Reason* , and her Dictates ; from the *Custom* of all Nations ; from the practice of *G O D*, both before , and in the time of the *Law* ; from the preaching of *Christ*, and his *Ministers* , in the time of the Gospel ; they are not only *justifiable*, but *expedient* and necessary in the Church of *G O D*.

Propo-



Proposition IV.

*The inflicting of Punishments,
as determined, is just and
necessary for the safety and
welfare of our Nation.*



A G I S T R A T E S care and endeavour ought to be, *to promote the welfare of the People to whom they are related*; and, without question, this is most likely to be compassed, by an *Impartial execution of an exact Righteousness.* R I G H T E O U S N E S S is not only the Girdle, Robe and Diadem of the Ruler; but the Stay, Crown and Glory of the whole Society.

Now

Now *Commutative Justice* in Contracts and Bargains (if men would not be partial to their own Interest, but dispatch them with equity, without fraud to each others convenience) conduceth highly to the *content, comfort, and prosperity* of a People. Yet because frequent *Contracts* are oft agreed of by Private persons, for the most part secretly, and rarerly fall under the Magistrates cognizance; At this time *Commutative Justice* will come little under our present Consideration. Our great respect in this Treatise must be to *distributive Justice*, which is of universal influence, and tendeth to *Publick peace and prosperity* of a Society. And it is the principal office and work of the just Magistrate, undoubtedly, to see this executed impartially.

Now, refined *Notions*, and empty *Speculations*, are not sufficient for the discharge of the Rulers duty in distributive *Righteousness*: But his business is done in his office by *practice and action*, and his care must be not only of passing a right Sentence, but of *impartial* execution of a meet Recompence, proportioned to the Merit of every mans work.

Not only, that they who obey honest Laws, and continue in *well-doing*, may have *Commands, Riches, Glory, and Honour and Rewards*, as encouragements to *Vertuous actions*; but also, that they who are wilfully disobedient, may have *Indignation, Wrath, Tribulation, Anguish and Penalties* inflicted, as restraints and deterrments from *sinful and Irregular attempts*.

N

And

And to see this latter done, is the Magistrates Province as much as the former, being sent by God as much for the *punishment of evil doers*, as for the *praise of them that do well*.

REWARDS and *PUNISHMENTS* are like two Pillars or Walls, that support and uphold the stately structure of *Righteousness*, under whose shadow and defence a People may abide and rest comfortably, in peaceful Habitations. Take away one *Pillar* or *Wall*, and all is shuffled together, the whole building becomes useless, and is ruin'd immediately.

Let there be no fear of an *ensuing Punishment* to follow upon acts of *Wickedness* in our Nation, and there will be little love or care of *Righteousness* in the midst of us.

That *Punishment* should be inflicted upon the Offender is natural and divine. God in the beginning did determine it, and surely what he determines is Just, in whom is no *unrighteousness*.

And if the threatning and determining of Punishments be *Just*, then it must follow, the *inflicting* of them must be *Just* also, and will follow certainly, *For he that is righteous hateth lying, and he that loveth Truth, will faithfully perform what he hath deliberately promised; and what he hath spoken for his Honours sake, will certainly bring it to pass.*

To act like God cannot be unjust; therefore *Gods Deputies* in judging any part of the World, as to determine punishments upon Offenders, so to inflict them when determined, must be *just* and *reasonable* also.

Again;

Again, *Rulers* are to be like God, and their chief Duty, by his appointment that sent them to the Office, both by the *Gospel* as well as the *Law*, is to *execute vengeance upon wilful Transgressours*. The *Sword* was given them, not as an empty badge of Honour, for a shew, for fashion, for ornament only, but for use, for employment, for terrour; *For he is the Minister of God, a Revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*, Rom. 13.4.

The Private man that taketh the *Sword* rashly, shall perish by the *Sword* of the *Magistrate* justly; and *who sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. And it is a great part of wisdom for an holy King, *to scatter the wicked, and to bring the Wheel over them*, Prov. 20.26.

And without any great pains, it may be proved to have been the will of God in all times, declared both before the *Law* of *Moses*, under the *Law*, and under the *Gospel*, that *Capital Punishments* (if the heynousness of the Crime deserved it) might be justly inflicted.

And if *Capital* and *Sanguinary punishments* can be proved lawful, because in all Ages appointed and allowed by God; sure *Emendatory punishments* cannot be denied but they may be inflicted, and their inflicting may easily be justified.

True indeed, we ought not to mock at *Calamity*, or rejoyce when an *Enemy* falleth. *Vengeance* ought not to be the Godly mans choice, which is not the delight of God himself; and 'tis not agreeable with the nature of Man, to delight himself with the grief, and to make himself pleasure with the torment of his Neighbour.

Yet it is reasonable and just the *Malefactor* should be punished, and that *tribulation and wrath* should come upon him that works *unrighteousness*. And certainly they have as little *Charity* as *Reason*, who blaspheme him as malicious or mischievous that accuseth or punisheth the *Rebellious* or *Injurious*.

1. *Punishments*, as to the *Malefactors*, prove but like bitter, unpleasing potions, that work strongly for succeeding health. And if *Capital*, their *Bodies* are destroyed that their *Souls* may be saved.

2. To put a period to the *Malefactors* wickedness;

*Ut quo uno modo
Possunt desinant esse mali.* Sen.

That they who would not learn to be good, may at last be restrained and cease to do evil.

3. That others may be affrighted. For,

Pœna ad unum, metus ad omnes.

That the whole *Congregation* may hear and fear, and that they may not dare to sin so presumptuously, or to commit any such evil among them; For when a *Scorner* is smitten, the simple will beware, *Prov. 19.25.*

4. That the *Righteous* may be preserved, which cannot be but by *Coertions* and *Restraints* upon the *Wicked*, keeping them in fear of *Punishment*. When, *Inter tot supplicia fontium satis tuta Innocentia*, *Innocence* it self is scarcely safe, and is
never

never secure amidst all the *Punishments*. And to suspend *Penalties* is the ready way to make the *Rulers* undervalued and contemned; their *Laws* slighted and reproached; to cause the Offender to grow secure, impudent and not ashamed; to make the heart of the Righteous *faint*, and the hands of the Wicked *strengthened*.

Upon these and some other Reasons, some dare not deny all *Penalties*, but would have them inflicted only for the breach of *Natural* and *Moral Laws*, but not at all for breach of *Positive* or *Humane*.

But I would have all *Dissenters* in this point consider that they may be informed, How *that cannot be unlawful, in probability, if done in the Government of Men, which was so oft done and practiced by God himself, in his dealings and actions, amidst the Government of his Chosen people.*

And it may very easily be made appear, upon a little observation, *That where God hath most clearly manifested his Care to persons or people, that there he required Obedience* (not only to commands of things or actions intrinsically in their own nature good, but also to commands of things or actions that in themselves were indifferent) *when once enjoined and published; in that he did not only take Vengeance on them that despised his Moral Precepts, but executed it most severely on them that transgressed his Positive Commands.*

Thus he most severely punished our First Parents for eating the *Forbidden fruit*; *Achan*, for touching the *unclean thing*; *Saul*, for sparing *Agag*, and saving the *best* of the *Prey*; the *Prophet*

for *eating Bread* in the other Prophets house ; *Lots Wife*, for *looking back*.

Certainly, upon good reason this was done ; for when God will maintain his *Prerogative* , and be tender of his *Honour* , How could he hold him guiltless that would despise his Authority *Commanding* ? suspect his Goodness or Wisdom , or both *Directing* ? and , who frowardly as discontented with his *wise disposal* , would betray his distrust of the *sufficiency of the Almighty* , and call in question his *direction* ; and wilfully shall gratifie their own *Humor* and *Fancy* , rather than dutifully submit to the exprefs designation and appointment of the most *wise God*. For, *Obedientia in iis, quæ parva sunt, exploratius probatur* ; Disobedience to those *least Commands* is the greatest Disobedience, when we dare rebel for a trifle.

And certainly, in submitting to *Commands* that seem least necessary, we give testimony of our greatest observance, when we bring under our *Reason* to our *Faith*, in his wise *Directions* , and silence our disputing with *ready Obeying*.

But when persons shall obey God only in those things they conceive *Reasonable*, or think them *profitable*, only when the nature of the thing requireth it, or their own *Interest* or *Advantage* is concerned ; Certainly, in such *Obedience* it may safely be concluded, *That such Persons offend rather than do what is acceptable* , when things are done with greater respect to please themselves , rather than out of *Reverence* to please their God. And these *Transgressions* which have been so great *Offences* against God, must needs be also when against his *Deputies*,
even

even the neglect and breach of Positive Laws ; and Punishments proportionably determined, are justly inflicted upon those that are thus unreasonably disobedient.

By this means persons discover their distrust of the *Providence of God* ; who, if any where, is to be found standing in the *Congregations of Princes*, and sits and judgeth amongst the *Gods* : And, by whom *Kings reign*, by him *Princes decree Justice*.

By this means the *Authority* of the Ruler is made vile and despicable, and his *Wisdom* undervalued, and *Directions* as contemptible.

By this means others are prompted by thy *Disobedience*, to harbour low conceits of their Governours, and to run with thee into the like disorder and miscarriage ; and the issue must be, *unyieldingness, opposition, confusion, and every evil work.*

And, by this means the *Morality* of the fifth *Commandment* is quite destroyed, when men can satisfy themselves with a formal (which is oft feigned) respect to the *Persons*, and have no regard to the *Commands* of their Governours.

When in truth, *Submission* to *Humane Ordinances*, as much as they are slighted, is the clearest evidence of thy *subjection* to *Higher Powers* ; and thy *Disobedience* is no slight trifling *disobedience*. That *Punishment* should be inflicted, as determined, upon such wilful Offenders, is just and reasonable, and undoubtedly according to the will of *Christ*.

And now well I wot for these Positions, especially for this last (which I will hereafter in spite of opposition, more fully and more clearly maintain, if either desired, commanded, or provoked

to it) I must undoubtedly expect and prepare for it, That Troops of *Antinomians*, *Anabaptists*, *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, *Quakers*, all the *Libertines* and *Separatists*, will with open mouth come roaring upon me, and charge me as a person of a fiery, cruel, persecuting disposition, that hath nothing of the Gospel Temper, nor of the Spirit of Christ.

But if they would thus go on to reproach and rail on me, and lay things to my charge of which I am not guilty of, God he knows, by those Courses they will never be able to acquit or purge themselves.

For who doth not see, how *Ambition*, *Opposition*, or *Interest* hath byassed and perverted their Judgments (if they can be said to have any in these things they pretend) when having stohn into a *Name* and *Party* (as they falsely think) considerable; and willing to set up both, out of *ambition* in themselves, and *opposition* to Governours; they never boggle, without check or fear, at the transgressing the *wise* and *honest Laws* established, and *Rules* prescribed unto us, suggesting falsely, by their words and practices, that they are unlawful; and when by their *obstinacy* they have incurred the danger of the Censure of the *Laws*, and the *Penalties* affixed to them, then it must be their main concern under a colour of *Meekness* and false-term'd *Moderation*, to strive for a lawless *Toleration*, that they may sin (when they cannot without *Guilt*) yet without *Punishment*.

And

And now , It is their great business openly to preach and declare, *That the execution of Penalties determined , ought to be suspended, if not rescinded,* and so endeavour to involve the whole Nation confusedly to run into an Universal *Licentiousness*, upon hope of *Impunity*. Things they can never believe fit to be granted, whatever they say.

For if the *Power* and the *Sword* were put into their hands , when no Nation can be preserved, nor *Justice* executed , without inflicting *Punishments* upon wilful Transgressours ; it is not to be imagined but they would quickly give a divorce to these *wild Principles* they seem to espouse and maintain ; *Punishments* would quickly be determined, and readily executed by them on *Dissenters* and *Disobedient* ; and no doubt of it, we should feel by too sensible experience , what we have formerly known , *That they would be more cruel and bloody, than any that can be justly charged upon our Governours to be so.*

And say what they can , it is evident it is not a *Toleration* but *Mastery* that these men aim at ; for had they power , I dare say, their fiery zeal would again be discovered to advance the Interest of their *Señ* and *Opinion* , and so severe would their *Determinations* be, and execution of *Penalties* upon *Dissenters* , as no man dissenting should find *Impunity* : Which, God forbid.

But now let us examine their *Objections* against our last mentioned *Positions* , and seriously observe their strength and reasonableness , if any to be found in them.

And

And they object thus unanimously, *That Bodily, or External Punishments, cannot be shewn to have been ordered, to be determined and inflicted by any Rules of the Gospel, nor proved that ever they were determined or executed by Christ or his Apostles, especially not upon Omission, or difference of any in the open profession of Faith, or publick exercise of Religion.*

And without hæsitancy, with as much earnestness, but with more truth and reason, we utterly deny all these things, and doubt not but to any sober Reason, we shall assert and prove the direct contrary.

It is confessed by all, and not denied by any that I have met with, That, before the last dispensation, *Bodily and External Punishments* might lawfully be agreed upon and inflicted, and so they were in every Polity and Government: that *Sin* might be restrained, and *Righteousness* executed, to preserve *Peace*, and promote the welfare of the Society.

Before *Christs* Incarnation, this is owned to have been natural and universal, and according to the different heinousness of Offenders Crimes, and their noxious influence; so by wise Governors there hath been ordered variety and difference of *Punishments*. The highest whereof have been *Capital, mortal*, destructive of the *Body and Life*, which is all the Ruler can reach unto. And that those have been lawfully inflicted before the *Law*, and in the *Law*, is acknowledged by our Adversaries themselves.

Now,

Now, if our Opposers cannot shew where this was repealed in the *Gospel*, I am sure I can shew where it was established; For Christ came not to *dissolve, or destroy the Law of Nature, but confirm and fulfil it*, and it must continue in Politics, as lawful in the times of the *Gospel*, as it was before, and in the time of the *Law*. And this Inference must follow, *If Capital, and destrucſtory Punishments may, certainly, those that are Emendatory may be determined and inflicted by Governours, from the Rules of the Gospel.*

Now, that the open and obstinate may perish by the *Sword* of the Higher Powers, *who beareth it not in vain*, is so plain from Christs own words and the Apostles Letters, as it were mispending of time to insist in a further proof or demonstration.

Therefore, some of our Adversaries are so modest, as to confess the *Gospel* doth permit *Capital Punishments* to be inflicted by Magistrates, upon contumacious persons, disturbing publick *Charity and Peace*; but for things or actions that concern *Piety or Religion*, either for *Omission or Transgression*, the *Gospel* gives the Offender an *Impunity and Indempnity*, say our Opposers in this particular; but with what truth or reason let any man judge.

But yet it is confidently asserted, *That Heresie, or any erronious Opinion (which man can give a Reputation unto with a specious name of CONSCIENCE, when it can be nothing less) ought not to be punished.*

IF

If by *Herésie* they mean, a secret though resolute electing or adhering to some *Opinion* or *Perſwaſion*, contrary to some fundamental Article of *Faith*, or some duty of *Religion*, if they keep it secret, that no man hath cognizance of it, the Magistrate can neither judge it, nor punish it, for his Power reacheth only to *external* and manifest things.

But *open publication* of this, defaming the *Gospel*, or any one Article of *Faith*, accompanied with an endeavour to gain *Profelytes* to his *Erroneous Perſwaſion*, this may be justly *censured* or *punished*.

Declared Herésie, and *open Schisms*, are of dreadful consequence to disturb the *Peace* of the whole Society.

St. Paul wished, and not unlawful, if the Magistrate endeavour, *they may be cut off that trouble it*. For such not only disturb the Society in point of *Piety*, but in point of *Charity* and *Peace*, while they cause difference of pretended *Judgment*, *Faith*, *Conſciences*; upon which there must follow *alienation* of *Affections*, and *Contentions*, as hath been declared before sufficiently.

Now, if those sins that abuse our *Piety* to God have as bad or worse influences, for unhappy consequences, as the sins that abuse *Charity* to our Neighbours; why they should have lesser, or no *punishment*, it is beyond my narrow Reason to discover.

This

This then I positively affirm, and will not doubt to maintain, *That Heresie or Schisme, when open and declared, and disturbs the Peace of the Society, or any other manifest sin, ought to have Punishments determined and inflicted by Magistrates, by the Rules of the Gospel.* And I hope it will be granted, what was ordered by those Rules, may lawfully be ordered by the Laws of Rulers to the end of the World.

It is yet insisted on, *These things were not done by Christ or his Apostles. That Christ threatned woes and destruction to the unbelieving Jews is unquestionably evident; and that as he threatned them, so upon their impenitence he inflicted them.*

True indeed, all the time of Christs Ministry and Humiliation, he did not manifest his Regal power, by *inflicting* Punishments, but only by *threatning* them upon supposed *Disobedience*. But when Ascended, taking upon him to be *Judge and King*, he punished the *Rebellious*; and the Judgments and ruine of the *Jews* must be acknowledged to have come by the avenging Power of *Christ*.

As he threatned, so he caused the root of the Tree to wither for its unfruitfulness. For not returning *Fruit* when demanded of his *Vineyard*, he pulled down the Wall thereof, and it was trodden down. For killing the *Heir*, he miserably destroyed the *Husbandmen*. Because *Jerusalem* would not be gathered together under the *Obedience* of the *Gospel*, he caused their House to be left unto them desolate.

And

And sure it cannot be supposed unlawful, if it be done by Christian Rulers upon *open* and *obstinate Transgressors*, which was evidently done by Christ himself.

And for the *Apostles*, Though they were not Kings, yet they had Authority to censure and punish those that were *obstinately disobedient*, and they did exercise their Power wherewith they were intrusted to this end, when their *Excommunication* was oft attended with *Temporal Penalties*, to the destruction of the flesh sometimes, that the *Soul* might be saved.

And who dare say, It is unjust for Rulers, appointed by God, to do the like things, for the same Reasons and End, which the extraordinary Spirit of Christ, given to the Apostles, effected.

One thing yet remains to prove, *viz.* That this was done upon *Omission* or *Recusancy* of *Obedience* to the Gospel. And questionless so it was; for Christ (because the *Jews* would not know the time of his Visitation in mercy) visits them with *Judgments*. They rejected him and his Counsel, would not receive the *Gospel*, and therefore he ordered and brought destruction upon them.

And thus was it done by the Apostles also, who for *open sins* and *disobedience* to Gospel Rules, came not alway with spirits of *Meekness*, but sometimes with a *Rod*. The *obstinate Offender* was ordered to be *Corrected* that he might be ashamed; sometimes he was taken away from the Society of the *Faithful*, and delivered to Satan for the *destruction of the Flesh*.

And

And, why should it seem unjust for our Magistrates to order the like things, when by the Rules of the Gospel, by the practice of Christ and his Apostles, *Punishments* may be determined and inflicted for *wilful Omission* of Gospel Duties, and manifest *Disobedience*.

And if any may, sure I am Ours be, that are ordered and determined with so much tenderness and moderation, as all the World must acknowledge our Rulers designs are to amend their Subjects and not destroy them. They shew themselves good Physicians, they love not many *Funerals*. They had rather heal the distempered Member, than cut it off. They proceed slowly and rarely to mortal *Punishments*, only when the heinousness of the Crimes exact them, and, if tolerated, would endanger the Peace of a great part of the Society. So that undoubtedly, the Clainours of *Oppression* and *Persecution*, when penal Statutes against *Recusants* are executed, as determined, can never be defended or excused.

When that peaceable and quiet state of the Church in the last Times, so oft commended, and promised, and desired by us, was promised upon a condition of a *Gospel Obedience*, and cannot in reason be expected upon Professors *wilful Recusancy*, and *open Disobedience*. Upon which, if any thing happens that is over-grievous and vexatious to the Transgressor, let him blame himself, and not his Rulers; When, *sua voluntate obligat se ad pœnam*.

For

For when Laws are agreed upon soberly and deliberately; when published openly as most convenient; when consented unto by declared *Vows* and *Subscriptions*, and when *Punishments* are fixed upon supposed Transgression; the *punishment* happens by the *Recusants* own election, for no man chooseth such a *Transgression*, but chooseth such a *Punishment*. He had warning, knew the danger, and would run into it; His blood be upon his own head.

Thus far we have reason, I hope, to conclude, *That Punishments are justly inflicted as determined*; It follows now we proceed to prove, *That it is necessary to inflict Punishments, for the safety and welfare of our Nation.*

Magistrates

MAGISTRATES, whose Offices are to their utmost, to advance the Publick good of the Community in which they are interessed, can no way more effectually discharge their Duties, than by taking care of an impartial execution of *distributive Righteousness*, rendring to every man the Recompence that is meet, according to the Merit of his work. And one essential part of this *distributive Righteousness*, is, *the just inflicting of Punishments upon those obstinate Offenders, who openly continue in evil doing.* In our present State this is necessary for the welfare of this Society in which we live.

That which evidently conduceth to the order and peace of our whole Nation, and without which all Orders of men are *disturbed and injured*, must be granted to be necessary.

But without the just inflicting of Punishment as determined, all Orders of Men are disturbed and injured. Ergo.

And, *That the omission or neglect of a just inflicting of Penalties, as determined, hath an hurtful influence upon all Orders of Men (if we do not unreasonably deny our senses and experience) we shall prove immediately.*

I. With all submission we shall presume to consider, *That an execution of Vindicative Righteousness makes the Rulers honourable, and without this, their Persons become despicable, and their Authority contemptible.*

Vindicative Righteousness is the glory of a Ruler, it begets an awful reverence and fear toward him from all his Subjects. The conspicuity of this makes a man more excellent than his Neighbour. This made every ear that heard Job to bless him, and every eye to bear witness unto him, and every knee to bow to him, because he broke the Jaws of the wicked, and plucked the Prey out of his Teeth.

Without this *Executing Vengeance*, when Rulers are cool and indifferent, and connive at open sins, it must create a suspicion in others, that they are ready to countenance them; Men can hardly forbear to entertain low and dishonourable thoughts of that Governour, when they see he takes no *Vengeance* upon the open Transgressor. They are ready to think, He is unworthily accounted above his Fellows, who shews not his love to *Righteousness* by his open hatred to *Wickedness*.

Without this activity of the Ruler, he hath, for the most part among his People, the same fate the great Logg had that fell into the Lake among the Frogs; at its first fall they trembled and hid themselves, but at length observing it stupid and inanimate, they crept up upon the top of it, and insultingly croaked over it. Like a Scarr-Crow, at whose first sight hurtful Fowls flock about and wonder at it, but perceiving it dead and unactive, then Terror vanishes, and they impudently sit upon the top of it, and defile it.

Thus *punitive Righteousness* exalts and renders Honourable, but *Indulgence* and *Impunity* of sins are

are *Reproaches* to the Rulers of any People.

Again, I humbly propound it to Honourable Rulers consideration, That their *Indulgence* to any open sin entitles them to the *guilt* of the same sin; *They have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, that do not reprove them.*

Poor Old Ely (good enough in other things for ought we read) by his *Indulgence* to his Sons sins, contracts that *guilt* that he dreadfully suffered, for GOD, by his Prophet told him, *That he had despised him, and set his Sons above him*, 1 Sam. 2. 29, 30. and by Samuel he is expressly told his *Iniquity* which he must know, viz. *His Sons had made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

And, let this be seriously thought of, That he who *acts a sin* may be caught suddenly in a surprisal, through the prevalence of a *Temptation*; but, he that *deliberately consents to anothers acting*, can hardly find a tolerable *Excuse*. He is *inexcusable, who knowing the judgment of God (that they who commit such things as are worthy of death) not only do the same, but take pleasure in them that do them.* *Faciens & Consentiens eadem lege tenentur: Qui tolerat aliena peccata cum tollere potest facit sua.* Religious Magistrates ought to take heed, that they do not make *Rebellious mens sins* theirs, by *Connivance* or *Indulgence*, who have too many to answer for of their own.

Again, as *Indulgence* in Rulers makes them guilty of sin, so it makes them liable to the *Judgment of GOD.*

This is plain in good Old Ely's case, his *gentleness* and *lenity* to his Sons proved *cruelty* to himself, and made him the sad object of the Anger of God; For God is known and honoured when *Judgment* is executed. And, *they that honour him in this, shall be honoured; and whoso despise this shall be lightly esteemed.*

And, what Ruler that is guilty of this sin, in *sparing* whom God would have punished, but must tremble when he reads the Sentence of the Lord by his Prophet to *Ahab*, when he spared *Benhadad*? 1 Kings 20. 42. *Because thou hast let go a man out of thy hand, whom I appointed to utter destruction; therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy People for his People.*

I truly honour, but dare not flatter those Rulers God hath set over us; and therefore I presume to put this into their remembrance, that *toleration* and *suspension of Penalties* may be feared, and hereafter avoided by them; because it is a *dishonourable sin*, and dangerous for them not to inflict *Punishments*, as determined upon *Recusancy* and *wilful Disobedience*. He must remove the *wicked* from him, and scatter all *evil* with his Eye, that would have his Throne established by *Righteousness*.

2. As inflicting *Punishments* is necessary for the Governours, so for all their Subjects, for the *Transgressors* sake, how grievous soever it may seem to him, yet it works for good. For if the *Punishment* be destructive it can but be of the *Body* only, and before that comes, *time* and *helps* are afforded, for working that *Repentance* which may be accepted,
so

so as the *Soul* we hope, by this means, may be saved.

But most of our *Punishments* are *castigatory*, for amendment ; and when (do we think) will the sinner be *amended* , if never *corrected*. He will hardly be drawn off from his accustomed Iniquity, that sees he can act it with *Impunity*. Because *Judgment* is not executed , his heart is freely set upon his wickedness. But,

Malo suo dedoceatur malus delinquere. Sen.

He is mad if he dotes and runs to that wickedness which he sees hated and abominated, and will certainly be punished. When he is sharply reprov'd, he will be ashamed.

There is a *Cruel* mercy sometimes in God and his Deputies which is to be feared , when they are resolved not to discover their *Anger* against Offenders ; when they seem to be contented with their *Delusions*, and suffer them to sleep on , vainly and securely, to their *final destruction*.

And there is a discovery of *Anger* from both, which ought to be loved ; when they hedge up the *Transgressors* way with Thorns ; when by pains they awaken them out of their *Lethargy*, and will not suffer them to sleep the *sleep of death*.

Thus, when *Indulgence* and *Impunity* contribute to the sinners destruction ; *executing of Judgments* must be judged necessary, when they must conduce to the *Transgressors amendment* and *salvation*.

3. *Executing of Judgments* is necessary for the

Righteous mans sake, without which he must be discouraged, he must be offended and troubled. *When Wickedness triumphs and bears sway, the righteous are sad; but when Righteousness rules, the godly rejoyce.* Impunity to the Sinner, is, a scandal, a stumbling-block to the Righteous. When it goes well with the *Wicked*, and they come in no misfortune like other men, the *Holy man* is prompted to think it is in vain he hath served God, or made choice of any of his *Waies*. If there be any love in Rulers to the flourishing of *Righteousness*, they cannot give way to the indemnifying of *Wickedness*.

4. *Inflicting of Punishments* on the Transgressors, helps on the *Amendment* of the whole Society. They will hear and fear, and will not dare to commit such *evil* as will torment them. *When Judgments are executed, the Inhabitants of the earth will learn Righteousness.* But, because sentence against an *evil work* is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the *Sons of men* is fully set in them to do evil. Care therefore is necessary in Rulers to punish open *wickedness*, if they desire about them an *Holy people*, and a Nation of *Righteousness*.

5. This is necessary to give a *Reputation* to our Laws, that they are justly and deliberately established, and have *Penalties* so affixed upon supposed *Disobedience*. Our lives would be confused and uncomfortable without *Laws*, and Laws are vain and unprofitable without *Execution*. By this *suspension* we give ground to others to suspect, that we our selves doubt and fear that our *Laws* determined are *needless* if not *unlawful*. But if they
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be *unjust* and *needless*, in Gods Name let them be repealed and abrogated; but if they be *just* and *necessary*, let us give them their deserved honour by a due *Execution*.

6. This is necessary for the *safety* and *welfare* of the whole Nation. For if the *Wicked* be acquitted and goes *unpunished*, it is an *abomination* unto the Lord: And, in any Nation, the not inflicting *Judgments* on *sinners*, hastens the coming of the *Judgments* of God. *There was not a man that executed Judgment in Jerusalem, &c.* Jer. 5. and God justifies the equity of his proceeding to Judgment against that City, by that expostulation, *Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord, and shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? If the faithful City becomes an Harlot; if she that was full of Judgment, and had once Righteousness lodged in her, shall pervert or neglect Judgment, Vengeance will come upon her from God, though with a sigh; Ah, I will ease me of mine Enemies, and avenge my self upon such Adversaries, saith the Lord of Hosts, the boly and mighty One of Israel, Isai. 1. 24.*

But the *Magistrates* anger for Sins, turns away Gods Anger from a Nation; and the executing of Judgment by *Man*, diverts the Judgment of God. *Phineas* stood up and executed Judgment, and the *Plague* was stayed. Executing of *Righteousness* not only appeaseth God, but procures his favour and blessings upon a People. It makes God delight to dwell amongst them; for *JUSTICE* and *JUDGMENT* are the habitation of his Throne. It not only speaks the *Beauty* but the sound *Con-*

stitution of that Government. Where Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other. Happy are the People that are in such a case; for the Lord will shew them what is good, and their Land shall yeild her increase.

If then the honour and preservation of our *Rulers* be precious unto us; If we be desirous of the *Transgressors* Conversion and Salvation; If we would not discourage and offend the *Righteous*; If we would not put a disreputation upon our *Laws*, to render them contemptible, Then our care must be, *that Punishments be inflicted upon open and wilful Transgressors, as determined; for this* (as you have heard it proved) *is not only just but necessary, for the safety and welfare of our whole Nation.*

Thus far, my Dear Country-men, I have communicated openly, and presented to your entertainment my serious Thoughts and Reasons upon four Propositions, so easily justifiable, as although I cannot hope but I shall have many *Opposers* and *Gain-sayers*, yet I confess, I do not fear any *Confuters*.

What I have published did not proceed out of *Opposition*, from the heat of an *inraged Passion* to carry me to any sharp reflections on particular Persons; but are considerately come abroad in the simplicity of my spirit, out of an unfeigned desire of *Truth and Peace*, which I heartily desire may at last prevail and triumph in the midst of us. The direct way to this end, is, *to receive these things with the same spirit that they are written.*

I verily believe, *Prejudice* will keep off many from reading or considering these Truths, asserted and proved in this Treatise, because they utterly destroy that *wild Liberty* and *Indulgence* which this Licentious Age so much affects.

Some few of that Temper will read them, but disrelish them, and I think (what many do) very few will be reclaimed by them. But yet I comfort my self, that my labour will not be in vain, if some of our wel-wishing Friends, of more *moderate Tempers*, will deign the favour of a look upon these weak Endeavours. If they be not *informed*, yet they will be more fully *confirmed*, in the practice of those Duties that are required at all our hands, when most agreeable to the *Law of Nature*, and the *Rules* of the *Gospel*.

But to our Reasoning and Arguing, we must call in the *Magistrates Sword* to assist; all without this will be little effectual, to reduce that *general Uniformity* desired, which will prove the beauty and glory both of this *Church* and *Nation*.

To you therefore I am constrained in this necessity, for our full Releif, to make my humble Address, that are our *R U L E R S*, and in Authority, appointed by God for our good. It is evident your Concern by your Offices, is, to carry on this great design, and are not barely to have respect to the *Notion*, but to the *Execution of Righteousness*; and so you are not only to animadvert severely upon *Transgressors*, of *moral, natural, necessary* and *divine Laws*; but upon those that break the *positive, particular, human Ordinances*, that you have
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in Your Wisdom *deliberately* and *justly* established among us.

If persons were so well disposed, as *Counsels* or *Monitions* might perswade all to be good, from the *Pulpit* or in the *Closet*, then no need to urge any Rigour from either *Bench* or *Barr*; but our unhappy Necessities require this at Your hands, who are Ministers of *Remunerative Justice*, to shew your selves as well a *Terrour to them that do evil*, as a *Countenance to them that do well*.

You see what a lamentable success your *Lenity* hath had hitherto, it must be *Severity* must do your business. Your method of leading this People, must be now like God leading his *Israel* from *Agypt* to *Canaan*: the Conduct must not be only as in the day, *to lead them by a Cloud*; but in this night it must be, *by a Pillar of Fire*. The eyes of these People have too long been daubed up with *Hony*, they must at last be opened with *Gall*: better to suffer some smart and Cure them, than suffer them, through *blindness*, to run headlong into the pit.

Breath then at last, fresh life into the languishing *Laws* of a fainting Kingdom, by an *impartial Execution*. Offer unto God the sacrifice of *Righteousness*, and take all care that *Justice* and *Judgment* may be executed in the midst of us. Remember, *Lenity* and *Indulgence* are Encouragements to the *Transgressor*; and *Cruelty* and *Grievances* to the *Innocent*.

If you conceal and smother *Disorder*; if you wink at *Wickedness*, and countenance *Disobedience*;
Oh,

Oh, sad Consequences ! both your *selves* and your *rebellious Laws* are dishonoured and slighted. You are injurious to the *Offender*, while his heart is hardened, because for his sin he is not corrected : You offend the *Righteous*, when he is scandalized : You hurt your *weak Neighbour*, for he is stagger'd if not perverted : You hurt your own *Souls*, for you are perjured ; yea, You are injurious to *GOD*, by Indulgence to *Recusancy* ; for his Worship is undervalued and contemned. For your *own*, for the *Laws*, for the *Offenders*, for the *Righteous*, for your *weak Neighbour*, for *Religion*, for *Gods sake*, let there be no more halting, no longer connivance be found in the midst of us. Execute true Judgment without *partiality*, and if we cannot have that *Obedience* to the Laws, which is justly required, let the *Offender* feel that just *Vengeance* which is threatned.

Then, and not till then, we may hope to see the two standing Ordinances, *MAGISTRACY* and *MINISTRY*, will be revered and respected, which as yet are but mocked at and despised. Then we may hope, the Laws about the *publick Exercise of Religion* will find obligation and observance, which as yet are let loose and weakned, and from too many meet with *scorn* and *contempt*. Then we shall once again see the *Faith* of the *Gospel* openly professed by every Believer, which now is concealed in most Congregations, as if men had cause thereof to be ashamed. Then, and not till then, will the Church of *England* recover her attractive *comeliness* and *beauty*, which
is

is now much defaced and loathed. Then *Uniformity*, the Glory of a Believing Nation, which hath been too long banisht, will be brought back with joy into every Congregation. Then there will be no more running into Corners, but the Tribes of our *Israel* will unanimously go up to the *House of their God, unto their Testimony, to give thanks unto the Name of the LORD.* Then shall God be glorified in all the Assemblies of his *Saints*, by open *Confession*, which he knows is my earnest endeavour and design, in my constant prayer in the Name of the Lord J E S U S. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory and honour, now and for ever, Amen.



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